







# TO THE R E A D E R.

*Christian Reader,*

**T**He more excellent any Duties of Religion are, the more useful unto the glory of God, with the good of Mankind; the more diligent and industrious is the common enemy of such things, either to corrupt the minds of Men about them, or to divert their hearts and affections from them. Of this nature is Charity and Bounty towards the Poor, and such others as are declared and proposed as meet objects of them in the Scripture; and such entertainment hath it met withal. Whoever readeth the Word of God with any attention or understanding, and withal considers the various disposal of the conditions of Mankind, of Christians, of Believers in this World, according to the Sovereign pleasure of his holy wise Providence, cannot but judge, that among all the external Duties, which are required of us in this World, there is none more necessary, none more useful, none wherein the glory of God is more concerned, than the due and abundant exercise of the fruits of Charity towards its proper Objects. The commands for it are so multiplied, the motives unto it are so excellent, the rules and directions for its exercise so plain and express, that it cannot be wholly neglected, without an open contempt of the Authority, Love, and Wisdom of God: Whence the Scripture pronounceth plainly all Religion to be vain, where this Grace and its fruits are separated from it. Whereas therefore it was a design beneath the craft of the Old Serpent, to seduce the minds of Men unto an open rejection or condemnation of it, unless he could at the same time have wrought them unto a general renunciation of all Religion; he made it his business in the days of Superstition and darkness, to corrupt them with false notions about it, and to divert its exercise from its proper Objects, that under an apprehension of its necessity, the real use and benefit of it,

unto the glory of God, and advantage of the Souls of Men, might be utterly lost. And the success he had herein, through the foresight, which the subtilty of his nature, and long experience have furnish'd him withal, hath been of no small use unto him, after the first design of it was in a great measure defeated. Hence it is that whilst the true nature of Charity, its Proper use, fruits, objects, and ends, with that respect which it hath unto God and our own Souls, were lost, obscured, depraved or corrupted, and all made subservient unto a proud imagination of merit, and other various superstitions, none more promoted the outward works of it than he, and they abounded amongst men. But when the false Ends, Rules, and Motives unto it, which ignorance and superstition had imposed upon its exercise were discovered and decry'd, he made use of pretences from former abuses, to alienate the minds of Men from a due apprehension of the absolute necessity of the constant and diligent exercise of this grace in such outward Duties as whereby others might be relieved. So he became a gainer by his loss. All things in point of Doctrine, as to the nature and work of Charity unto the defeatment of Superstition, being rightly stated among us, Men grew cold and regardless of their duty in it; as though they were resolved they would not do well, unless they might do it on evil Motives and for ill ends. And because too much formerly hath been ascribed unto it, unto the corruption of all Religion, some think it reason enough quite to neglect it. But these methods of Satan have been sufficiently detected; and I suppose most men are and may be easily convinced, that there is a wide distance between performing works of Charity to merit the Salvation of our Souls, and the neglect of them unto their damnation, and a safe plain path to walk between them.

But the truth is, the most forcible objections against the due exercise of Charity, and abounding in the fruit of it, are those which arose from that influence which unbelief and corrupt affections have upon the minds of Men. And amongst those the chiefeft, and that which Men judg to have the evidence of demonstration in it is this, that what they part withal for the relief of others, doth in

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proportions decrease their own enjoyments. And whereas the minds of many do greatly extend their desires beyond their present possession of earthly things, and the necessary occasions, as they suppose, of the most, at present and for the future with respect unto their Families, being proportioned in a scanty measure unto what they enjoy, the force of this Objection is great, and worketh effectually on all occasions of the due exercise of Charity. Neither can it be otherwise conceived, if respect be had unto the present instance only. For he that maketh the best and most advantageous bargain or purchase, is sure enough to be a loser by it, if there be not a time of making a return in his way of trade. But the common assurance hereof, is sufficient to satisfy the minds of Men, in parting with their money on such occasions. Wherefore against this last strong hold of Satan in the imaginations of Men, against the due exercise of Charity and Bounty, the Reverend Author of the ensuing Discourse hath planted that Battery from Scripture, Reason, and Experience, whereby what seemeth of real strength in it, is utterly demolished. His design is not to prove, nor will he undertake that he who is bountiful unto others, shall surely thrive in this world, if he hath no other end of his Charity and Bounty, but only that he may so thrive. But on a right and due performance of this duty, in obedience unto the command of God, out of love to Christ, according unto the Rules, and for all its proper ends, he undertakes to demonstrate, that no man shall be a loser thereby. Yea he goeth farther, and proves from plain testimonies of Scripture (against whose evidence there is no rising up but by express unbelief) confirmed with signal instances of experience, that in the ordinary way of Gods dealing with Professors of the Gospel, their Charity, Liberality, and Bounty shall certainly conduce unto their advantage in this world, especially where they are eminent in their exercise; so as that the truth lies absolutely on the other side of this objection. And no more is required for the satisfaction of the minds of Men herein, but that they exercise faith in the promises of God, in proportion unto that trust which they have unto the advantages of trade from common prudence and experience.

For in neither way may men ordinarily expect present sensible returns; nor will an industrious Person be discouraged, if he find no great present gain in his trade, or meet with some losses, whilst he is in the way that rationally and probably leads to advantage. Nor ought we to prescribe other measures unto our selves, nor expect immediate visible advantage, as to the concerns of this world in what we trade withal for immortality and glory, especially having the security of Gods promise to rely upon, which so far exceeds what the minds of men may fancy to themselves, from the ordinary course of things here below. Allow therefore the determination of times, seasons, ways, and manners of things unto the Sovereign pleasure of God, and there is no more certain truth than what is here proposed; namely, that abounding in works of Charity is *The best and safest way of Thriving* in this world. And an eminent truth that is, which the Reverend Author hath rescued from general inadvertency or oblivion, the effects whereof have been little discerned, because the faith of it hath been so much lost. And I must add, that Divine Providence hath cast the discovery and defence of this great ~~and useful~~ Truth upon a person eminently suited unto the Work he is called unto. For whereas he is deprived of all outward advantages (as well as many others) not only of encreasing his wealth in the world; but of ordinary supplies for himself and family, beyond his own peculiar Patrimony, he abundantly manifests himself to live in the faith of that truth, which he endeavours to implant on the minds and consciences of others; and doth but invite men into the same belief and practise with himself. And the truth which he pleadeth for, is so fully confirmed and illustrated by himself, that there remains no more for me or others to do unto that end, but to give our testimony unto it, and to endeavour the acceptance of it with all Professors of the Gospel, which I hereby do, and shall do, as God shall administer opportunity.

John Owen.



# To the READER.

*Good Reader,*

**T**Hou hast here put into thy hands an exhortation to *Charity*, a duty so lovely and \* *God-like*, that without *other arguments* it bespeak- \* *Alt. 20.* eth its own respect; but the dull heart of man needs to be *excited* and *quickened*, we all love a *cheap Religion*, but the *costly* and *expensive* duties are too often neglected and declined, therefore the *Reverend Author* in this *Treatise* thought fit to recommend the practice of a *more liberal* and *dissuasive Alms-giving* with the more *earnestness* to well disposed Christians. A *meet Advocate* for so good a *Cause*, we willingly hear every man in his own *Faculty*, none so fit to exhort others to *Charity*, as those that are *eminently Charitable* themselves.

For the *Argument* he useth I am fully of his mind, *That Liberality doth not impoverish men, but enrich them* rather, as *Wells* are the *sweeter* but not the *emptier* for the *ostener* dreining: A *Truth befriended* by the *Scripture*, *Reason*, and the *constant observation* and *experience* of the *World*. 1. By *Scripture*, witness the many *temporal Promises* scattered throughout the *Word of God*, and applied to the *Charitable*. If any reply that these things were spoken *pro more sacerdotis* according to that dispensation of the *Covenant*, when *Eternal happiness* was more sparingly received; and that *temporal things* are not so absolutely promised under the *Gospel*, as under the *Pedagogy* of the *Law*, because *Life and Immortality* are now brought to light. I answer that yet *God* doth not discontinue the dispensation; look as the *Promises of Eternal Life* was not wholly shut out of that *Covenant*, yet the *temporal Blessing* did more visibly appear in it, so now the *temporal Blessing* is not wholly shut out, though the *Gospel* runneth mainly on *spiritual* and *eternal Blessings*: Yea and I will add further, that it seemeth by our *Lords* own speech, *Luk. 6. 35.* And *Pauls* quotation, *2 Cor. 9. 9.* That the old *Testament* promise of *Plenty to the Almsgiver*, doth belong to the *Gospel* and standeth firm and in full force under the *New Testament dispensation*, and so seemeth to be exempt from the lot of his fellows, or to be a *Peculiar* and *reserved case*.

2. It seemeth also agreeable to *reason*, for the *Devil*

is not the dispenser of temporal blessings, but God, and a faithful improvement of them is not the way to forfeit, but secure and increase them; faithful Stewards have not the trust taken out of their hands, but the *unfaithful*. Luk. 16. Add to this, that God loveth to pay in kind, and to retaliate with men, both in rewards and punishments, Mat. 9. 7. *Blessed are the Merciful for they shall find Mercy.* Moreover consider how conducive it is to the concernment of the World, that *unbelief* should now and then be sensibly confuted, Mal. 3. 10. *Prove me now here with, saith the Lord of Hosts.* By instances in this kind God submitteth to a *Trial* upon experiences. Lastly, how cautionally may it be presumed, that men, that have a *large heart*, should not be disabled by their bounty, but still have a *sufficiency* to perform more Acts of that kind; and the prejudiced World may have no cause to think that their *Improvident* bounty hath brought wans upon them, if it were indeed so, I plead not for it, but the most regular bounty is in the Worlds esteem *improvident*, for they think *all lost* which is not reserved for them and theirs, or expended on their lusts.

3. I alledge the *Observation* and *Experience* both of *Ancient* and *Modern* times, who have always found that this *Leavening* tends to *increase* as the *Loaves* in the Gospel Miracle were increased in the distribution. *Chry-*

*fostom* is often improving this observa-  
*Chryso. Hom.* 33. tion. I remember in one place he  
*pauis filiorum Ze-* faith of the poor ἡ δὲ οὐκ ἐπὶ  
*saith* λαμβάνουσι τὰς τιμὰς αὐτῶν rather than

λαμβάνετε ἵνα ἡμεῖς ἴδωμεν ὅτι οὐκ ἐστὶν ἡμεῖς ἡμεῖς. And again, μὴ ὁ νόμος ἐλεημοσύνην ἀνάλωμα εἶναι ἀλλὰ θέσιν, do not think alms to be a wasteful profusion but a traffic, you receive more than you give, &c.

I might relate here what \* *Paulus Diaconus* \* *Paulus* Di-observeth of Emperour *Tiberius* the *Secundus lib. 3. cond.* who was a great *Almsgiver*, and the large streams of his bounty were still fed

12. large streams of his bounty were still fed by the *strange and unexpected supplies* which God sent him from time to time, as by finding *casually* a vast treasure hid in the Palace, as also by the Treasures of *Nurses* hid in *Italy*, and other means, he was never *weary of giving*, and God was never *weary of blessing*, that he might *still give more*.

**BUT**



But I must forbear multiplying these influences, lest this *reambulary writing* swell beyond all due proportion.

Upon these reasons I think the argument enforced in this book sound and good, and proper to its end, and hath the more force, because it attacketh covetousness in its own quarters, a piece of wisdom which I observe in our Lord *Jesus Christ* every where.

But yet I would interpose these *Cautions*, first that temporal things are not to be looked upon as the chief reward, nor to be our great motive; the eternal reward together with the conscience of our duty or love to God must suffice, and for other things refer it to him, for what may be expected in this kind. There are in this and in every duty, four sorts of principles which men are acted by; some false and rotten, as vain glory, *Matth. 6. 1.* Some more tolerable, as fear of Temporal judgments, and hope of Temporal Mercies, some very good and sound, as hope of Eternal reward, *Heb. 6. 9, 10, 11.* Some rare and excellent, as thankfulness and love to God, a due impress of his great love to us by Christ, *2 Cor. 8. 8, 9.* The Glory of God, *1 Cor. 10. 31.* *Phil. 1. 11.* Complacency in the work, &c. Now they that would be sincere should be tender of their motives.

Secondly, God will try our faith: For a great while this *redemption* may be suspended, *Eccle. 11. 1.* After many days thou shalt find it. It may be, if you do not find it your Children may, for it bringeth an extraordinary blessing on our families. *Psal. 37. 26, &c.* At other times the recompence may be more speedy, as in increasing the Widdows oil, *1 Kings 17. 13, 16.*

Thirdly, We should not lift up a secret desire of worldly increase to satisfy our Covetous minds: in short this motive may be urged to check temptations to sordid sparing. And when God maketh any such returns of our bounty it should be observed and improved as a confirmation of our faith, and an *intouragement* to our labour of Love, and a Plea to quicken others from our own experiences, when the fear of want maketh them backward to Charity. I have no more now to add but prayers, that God would bless this Treasure to thee, and granting to the Author, an all sufficiency in all things that he may still abound in every good work.

Thine in the Lord's Service

Thos. Manton.

# To the READER.

Reader,

**G**Od, whose right is Supreme in our Persons and all that we possess, has impos'd a tribute on us, not for his own profit, but of those who are his deputed receivers. And his most wise Providence has order'd the various conditions of men here, that some abound, some are in want, that they might glorifie him by the exercise of several Graces; the poor by an humble patience and contented resignation to his will, and the rich by a compassionate liberality to their brethren.

The performance of this duty, gives us a regular enjoyment of what we have. 'Tis our Saviours command *give alms of such things as you have, and behold all things are clean unto you.* Till the first fruits were offer'd up under the Law, none of the Israelites might eat of the new Corn, 'twas yet profane to them; but afterwards the whole harvest was consecrated, and granted to their free use.

The neglect of paying what God has reserved as an acknowledgment we have received all from him, makes a forfeiture of our estates. And how foolish is it to deny a part at his Command, who can by right and power deprive us of all in a moment?

But though Gods Title be paramount, yet he is pleased to invite us to acts of a diffusive Charity by the most persuasive arguments. Godliness is profitable unto all things (and especially this branch of it) *having the promise of life that now is, and of that which is to come.* And to confirm our belief, that it has a happy influence upon our prosperity here, 'tis added *it is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation.* Gods signs himself our debtor for that that is laid out for him, as if it were not all his own. *He that has pity on the Poor, lends to the Lord, and that which he has given he will pay him again,* and that not only from the treasury of eternity hereafter, but here in temporal blessings: so that if we consider our future or present interest, there are great encouragements to remove the hinderances of this blessed duty.

Covetousness as it implies an eagerness and excess in

procuring

procuring an estate, springs from different inclinations. Sometimes from sensuality, to make provisions for the Flesh, or from ambition, by that means to obtain honour, and others of the like nature; and when the guilty affection is mortified, the immoderated desire of riches that was a symptomatical distemper ceases with it.

But the usual fountain of covetousness, as it implies a tenacious humour, and irregular base keeping what they possess: are 1. A jealousy of losing what was got with much diligence, and care, and labour. 2. Solitude for the future, Men are as anxious to preserve what they have, as ardent to procure what they have not, to secure themselves against all possible wants. Now the word of God assures us, that the best way to preserve and increase our estates, is by giving liberal supplies to the want of others.

*The liberal man devises liberal things, and by liberal things he shall stand.* He that Considers where he may disperse his bounty, and place a benefit to the best advantage, has a special protection, and as he is like God in giving, so he shall be in not being the poorer for his giving. There is an inseparable Connexion between Give, and it shall be given to you again. Charity is a productive grace, that enriches the giver more than the receiver. The great Lord of all things sometimes by admirable ways, beyond all humane expectation blesses the Merciful; and gives a present reward, as if it were by his own hand. As there are numerous examples of Gods justice in punishing the covetous, sometimes by sending a gangreen into their estates that consumes it before their eyes, sometimes by the profuseness of their Children that waste all in a short time, that was got by excessive sparing, so 'tis as visible that his providence blesses those in their persons and Children, who have been faithful Stewards in dispensing what is committed to their trust.

This methinks should prevail ever with the men of sense. Do not they every day venture their estates for gain, though a fire, a ship-wrack a bankrupt, or innumerable other disasters may undo them? and shall an unfaithful world have more credit with us than the God of Truth? is not his power over all things? He governs the wills of men, commands the Winds and Seas, makes the fields fruitful.

But

But the sons of the earth may object, that those who are charitable are not always prosperous, but sometimes are in exigencies themselves. To this a just answer may be given.

1. The meer external work of Charity does not entitle to the blessings of the promise, but when it is perform'd a right. 1. From what is our own: Some that are enrich'd by unjust means, think to quiet their consciences, and appease God by giving part to good uses; as if he would be a receiver of their thefts, and corrupted with a share in their spoils. But he hates robbery for a burnt offering. 2. The end must be sincere, to imitate the Father of mercy's in that attribute that is his dearest glory, by a liberal relief of our brethren. 3. The affection in giving must be free and joyful. 'Tis the heart that gives price to our gifts in Gods esteem. A cup of cold water taken from the spring of love shall not fail of a reward. But the richest gifts without it are of no value with him.

2. Supposing a Christian to abound in works of Charity, and to perform them according to Gods will, 'tis possible he may not have a reward here, that our Charity may not be with a chief regard to our temporal interest, and for other wise reasons. But this special case will not infringe the truth of Gods promise. When God encouraged the Obedience of Children to their Parents, promised them long life in the land of *Canaan*, was it deceitful dealing, if he translated a dutiful child to live for ever in heaven that infinitely better country? If I promise one a shilling for his days labour, has he reason to complain if he receives a piece? God may give above, but never below his promise. He reserves a liberty to be better than his word to his servants. And this consideration should inflame us to this duty. The crown of life and treasures of Heaven are motives of a nobler strain, and more worthy the breast of a Christian, than any present payment, notwithstanding a believer might have an eye to temporal benefits as the manifestations of Gods goodness, but chiefly to eternal. In short the blessings of both worlds are promised as the reward of Charity. O that happy advantage of rich men, if they had hearts to improve it.

William Hall.

# To the READER.

Good Reader,

**T**He Author of this Book doth not here sollicite you to Charity for nothing, nor for himself, but upon high and honourable designs, though managed by a man not high in the Pomp and Splendour of the world; yea upon the high design of your own Salvation, God can relieve the poor, and do good to other men without us; but it is our honour to be made his Stewards, and his great mercy to us, to receive that honour, yea to have a willing heart, though we want a purse: Who hath not some talents by which he may do good, if he improve them, and for which at the time of retribution he must give account. If *Peter and John* must say *silver and gold have we none*, yet such as they have, they may and must give.

Charity in general is praised by all Sorts of men, even by them that will not practice it, yea by the destroyers that set themselves against it: even our *Judas's* that bear the bag, pretend Charity to the poor, while they grudge it unto Christ, as needless waste: Yea it is for pretended Charity, that Charity and the Charitable are destroyed, and cruelty used to mens Souls *and bodies*. Will not all the world then condemn us if we be not Charitable. Papists are for Good works on one account, and Protestants on another, yea *Mohometans* and *Heathens* on another; but all cry up Charity and good works. But in what do men more sin against their own professions, except it be in their want of the highest act of Charity, even their Love to God, and holiness, and glory.

Its pity men should need any other motive, than that which is fetcht from God's favour, and the heavenly reward. But yet Christ who hath promised an hundred fold (in value) in this life, alloweth us to use that promise as our lower motive. Three sorts of Judges will censure this book, which perswadeth men that *Good works* are the way to *Thrive*, that is, *After Reason, Faith and Experience*. *Meer Reason* will be ready to say, that this is but *affected talk* to open mens purses, and not believed by him that writeth it: because it is an unlikely thing: *Faith* will soon consent to it, that at least, we shall have a reward in Heaven, and so much here as God seeth to be best. But the question is, what experience faith. They that never tryed the way, can have no experience of it. And two sorts more there are that may be able here to give no testimony to it: first those that have miscarried in the manner, and taken those for good works, which (at least *be* *good*).



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mine) were none. Secondly, and those that God teach me to try, as *Job*, and keep low in the world, either to save themselves from sin, or to exercise the Charity of others. For my own part seeing the Author desireth me to speak my own experience, I must say, *That I never prospered more in my small estate, than when I gave most, and needed least.* I have in another book of this Author said something of the *Quintessence*. How much must be given, whether the tenth at least. My own rule hath been, first to contrive to end my self as little as may be, and lay out none on need-nots, but to live frugally on a little: 2. To serve God in my place upon that little competency which he allowed me to my self, that what I had my self might be as good a work for common good, as that which I gave to others: And 3. To do all the Good I could with all the rest, preferring the most publick, and the most durable, and *ceteris paribus*, the nearest. And the more I have practised this, the more I have have had to do it with, and when I gave almost all, more came in (without any gift) I scarce knew how, at least unexpected: But when by *improvidence* I have cast my self into necessities of using more upon my self, or upon things in themselves of less importance, I have prospered much less than when I did otherwise. And when I had Contented my self to devote that stock which I had gotten to Charitable uses after my death, instead of laying out a present, that so I might secure somewhat for my self while I lived, in probability all that is like to be lost; where-as when I took that present opportunity and trusted God for the time to come, I wanted nothing and lost nothing.

*Experiences* are contemptible to none but *Atheists*, who believe not Gods *Providences*? I remember that great and excellent Person (whose published *Contemplations* hint the same to the world, though without his consent) hath told me, how the strange providences of God in laming and disabling his horses, and other impeditions in a Journey towards *London*, for worldly advantages, on the Lords day, when he was young, did convince him, and engage him ever after to spend that day as he hath since done, and there directed his Children to see God governeth this world, and hath some previous rewards and punishments, stops and helps, though the great and full retribution be hereafter. I perswade none imprudently to cast away their estates, and make themselves beholden to others: But I say with this Reverend Author, that I am perswaded, did men more devote themselves and all that they have, to do the greatest Good they can in the world, it would not only make life sweeter, consciences quieter, and death easier, but also be a notable means of Gods prospering them in their estates, except in some cases of special trial, or needful and profitable affliction.

Richard Baxter



THE  
Surest and Safest  
WAY OF  
THRIVING.

Math. 10. 41, 42.

*He that receiveth a Prophet in the name of a Prophet, shall receive a Prophets reward: and he that receiveth a righteous man in the name of a righteous man, shall receive a righteous mans reward.*

*And whosoever shall give unto one of these little ones, a cup of cold water only, in the name of a Disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward.*

**T**HE troubles whereunto God bringeth his Ministers and People, though they be many and Great, yet are they not more, and greater, then the comforts which He affordeth unto them, to support and encourage them in their troubles. Instance this Chapter, and the Sermon of Christ therein recorded, concerning those fore Trials whereunto his Church and Children should be brought. As any kind of affliction is foretold, a proper and peculiar consolation is usually annexed. Therefore to establish the hearts of his suffering Servants, and to encourage their Succourers, He closes up His Sermon with the words of the text, wherein He declareth not only that high account which he had of His Ministers, and People themselves, but also of them who should yield any relief, or upon His account shew kindness to them, assuring them; *That he who receiveth*

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with a Prophet in the name of a Prophet, should receive a Prophets reward. And he that receiveth a righteous man in the name of a righteous man, should receive a righteous mans reward.

The words in brief contain, A Declaration of the great benefit, which they bring to themselves, who afford any relief, and succour to Ministers, or other Saints; teaching, That there is no such way to fill our Treasures, as by emptying them for God.

For the clearing of the words, I shall briefly shew you,

1. Who is here meant by a Prophet. And who by a Righteous man.

2. What is meant by receiving them.

3. What is the Reward which followeth thereupon.

1. For the first, who is here meant by a Prophet; and who by a Righteous man.

By a Prophet our Saviour here meaneth not only extraordinary Ministers, such as were immediately and extraordinarily inspired by the Holy Ghost; or who had extraordinary revelations to foretel things to come: but also ordinary Ministers of the word, and interpreters of the Scriptures, as *Joh. 4. 44. Rev. 11. 18.*

By Righteous men he meaneth his Saints, or such as testify their justification through faith in Christ, by their sanctification, and fruits of a good conscience, whom commonly the Scripture stileth Saints.

II. For the Second what is meant by receiving these;

For Answer thereunto, you must know, There are two things whereunto this receiving may have a respect.

1. To the word and message of a Minister, and so it signifies, the hearkning to, and embracing their holy Counsel and Doctrine.

2. To the Person of a Minister, and so it signifies, the harbouring or shewing kindness to him, as is evident from the instance of cold water, given unto a Prophet, or Righteous man; exprest in the following verse. Both these are imployed under this phrase of receiving a Prophet, viz. His Doctrine, by embracing, and submitting to it; and his Person, by harbouring, succouring, and relieving him according to his need.

By the receiving a Prophet, in the name of a Prophet, is meant

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meant a succouring and relieving him *for his particular calling sake, eo nomine*, because he is a Prophet. So *by receiving a righteous man, in the name of a righteous man*, intendeth the same thing; namely, the relieving him, *for his General callings sake*, because he is a Christian, a child of God, and a member of Christ.

III. For the third particular, what is here meant by *the reward of a Prophet, and of a righteous man*? I Answer, These phrases of *receiving a Prophet, and of a Righteous mans reward*, may be taken *Actively*, or *Passively*. *Actively*, for that reward which a Prophet or a righteous man giveth. *Passively*, for that which is by God given to the one, and to the other. *The reward which a Prophet giveth*, is ministerially to preach the word of Reconciliation to such as receive them, as Peter did to Cornelius, Act. 10. 34. &c. To Pray for them, as Abraham for Abimelech, Gen. 20. 7, 17. And, to bless them, as Melchisedec blessed Abraham, Gen. 17. 19.

The reward which a righteous man giveth is privately to instruct, and edifie, to pray for, and to be a good pattern, and example of righteousness, to such as entertain or otherwise relieve him.

*The reward which is given by God*, to either of these, for that kindness which any shew unto them, is such a surpassing, and excellent weight of glory, as cannot be expressed by the tongue of men, or Angels, yet different in degrees, as is evident, Dan. 12. 3.

Some take these phrases, *Of receiving a Prophet, and a righteous mans reward*, in the former sense, *Actively*; and others, *Passively*. I conceive it may be taken in both.

The words thus explained do afford unto us several points of Doctrine.

From the duty here expressed of receiving, and relieving Prophets, and righteous men, with the manner of setting it down, we may observe.

1. Doct. That all needful succour, and good entertainment is to be afforded to Ministers of the Gospel. This is the main and principal point intended.
2. Doct. Christian kindness is to be shewed not only to Ministers, but also to all the members of Christ. For

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our blessed Saviour contents not himself to have mentioned a Prophet, but also addeth a *righteous man*.

These two sorts make up *The household of Faith*; to whom the Apostles exhorteth Christians especially to do good, *Gal. 6. 10.*

Q. *Is our Charity to extend no further?*

A. Yes, even to all that are in want, but especially to such as have a particular relation to Christ, as being his members, or Ministers; because Christ in them is after an especial manner succoured, and relieved. It will be therefore our wisdom to take notice of the extent of this duty, and in all we do, either for Christians or others, to see to it, that what we do, is done for the Lords, and for conscience sake, to the one in compassion to his members, to the other in obedience to his will.

4. Doct. *According to the kindness which we shew, shall our reward be.* He that receiveth, and relieveth a Prophet, shall receive a *Prophets reward*. And he that receiveth and relieveth a *righteous man*, shall receive *the reward of a righteous man*.

### Verse 42.

*And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones, a Cup of cold water only in the name of a Disciple, he shall in no wise lose his reward.*

These words are added by our Saviour to the former to anticipate some Objections, which might be made thereupon, as also more fully to explain the fore-mentioned points.

1. Obj. May be thus made, These Preachers and Professors of the Gospel are but mean persons, and little in esteem, what great reward can be expected for entertaining them?

A. As little as they be, be they as inconsiderable and contemptible as the proud world make them, yet are they not



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*so little in the eyes of the Lord, but that he will reward all such as are friendly to them.*

2. *Obj.* I my self am but poor, and can do but little for them.

*A.* Though thy kindness be never so small, as small as a *cup of water*, and that *cold*, taken out of the River, without any pains or cost to heat it, yea but *ONE* cup full thereof, and no more. (supposing that to be the best thou canst do for them) yet it shall be rewarded by him, who more respecteth the willingness of the Giver, than the greatness of the Gift.

The greatest difficulty in the words is who are here meant by *little ones*, for whose sake the reward is promised.

By *little ones*, our Saviour meaneth no other than such in the foregoing verse, he had said *Prophets and righteous ones*.

They are called *Little ones* in two respects.

1. *In regard of the worlds esteem of them.*

2. *In regard of their own account of themselves.*

First, *They are little in the worlds eye.* The world which judgeth not according to inward worth, have them in low esteem. It fares with the servants, as it fares with their Master, they are despised, and rejected, and troden under foot of men. Of old they were accounted *Desolate and forsaken*, *Isa.* 62. 4. In the *Apostles* time, the *filth of the world*, the *offscouring of all things*, *1 Cor.* 4. 13. Experience of all ages verifieth as much. And among other ages ours giveth not the least evidence.

That comfort and contentment which God's people find in the Lord, and the light of his countenance, yea that hope they have of finding grace in his eyes, make them the less to mind, and seek after the honour, wealth, and promotions of the world, and commonly they have but little of it. Now the world judgeth according to outward, earthly, worldly glory, it discerneth not the spiritual glory of the Saints, *1 Joh.* 3. 1.

Judge not of men according to the worlds judgment: think

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think not ever the more meanly of Saints, because the world thinks so of them. They are highly favoured of the most High: they are such of whom the world is not worthy, They are the excellent ones, *Psal. 16. 3.* but whatever they be in deed, in the eye of the world they are but *little ones*.

Secondly, *They are little in their own eyes, Gen. 18. 27.* we read how *Abraham* in speaking to God, styles himself no better than *Dust and Ashes*. And *Gen. 32. 10.* *Jacob* acknowledgeth himself unworthy, or, *less than the least of God's Mercies*.

The ground thereof may be because the Saints best know themselves, since they more thoroughly than other men, search their hearts, and observe their ways, and compare themselves with the pure and perfect law of God, and take notice of their inward Secret corruptions, as well as of their outward and visible transgressions: and thus come they to know more of themselves, then any other can, or may suspect of them. And this clearer sight of themselves brings them down, and lays them low. This made Saint *Paul* to cry out, *Rom. 7. 24.* *O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?* This is a note of true grace, and of a sanctified heart. They are the *poor in spirit*, not the proud in Spirit, that are Christs blessed ones, *Mat. 5. 3.* The false disciple thinketh highly of himself, and would be accounted not *μικρός* a little one, like a true disciple of Christ; but *μεγας τις* Some great one, like to *Simon Magus*, *Act. 8. 8, 9.* This Spirit is a Satanical Spirit. Try the Spirit by this note, whether it be of God, or no.

But though all the Servants of God are on the fore-mentioned account *little ones*, yet there are some among them less than others, as in regard of their offices, and stations in the Church, some are in higher, others are in lower Offices, some are in office, others not; So also in regard of their parts and gifts, and graces, some are strong, and others are weak; some the chief, others the least of Saints: some as the head, and others but as the finger, or the foot: and 'tis probable the text hath the most special respect (and the Emphasis of it is the



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the greater) to the least of all these little ones, & so the expression is *Matth. 25. 40.* In as much as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, yet have done it unto me.

This I the rather take notice of it to give an hint to Christians in their Charitable distributions to have an eye to such Ministers or Christians as are more obscure, and less considerable in the World. Possibly when those of greater worth and remark may taste deeply of their bounty, every one almost hath a kindness for them: in the mean time there may be some poor hidden ones, whose worth is less, but their wants are greater, who being low in those gifts or graces which would commend them to the more publick notice, are almost buried in forgetfulness. It's true that by how much the more eminent the person is that is relieved (*ceteris paribus*) by so much the more excellent the work: yet special care should be taken that the more obscure and least deserving among all that belong to God be not forgotten.

The words thus explained, afford unto us two special points of Doctrine.

1. Doct. God taketh notice of every of his Saints, even of the least of them, and of kindness shewed to them.

Though Joseph was but a lad, and sold as a slave, yet being one of the Church, one of the little ones, yea *minimorum minimus*; yet in *Egypt* God takes notice of him, and of that kindness which was shewed to him *Gen. 32. 5.* Many other like examples are noted in the Scripture; but none more fit for our purpose than the example of *Lazarus*, *Luk. 16. 20.* though he were a very poor beggar, and full of sores, and despised of *Dives*, and all his household, yet God took such notice of him, as he made his Angels attend him. Yea God took notice of the kindness which the Dogs shewed him, for their licking of his sores is recorded to all ages. Note those expressions of the Psalmist, *Psal. 40. 12.* But I am poor and needy, yet the Lord ibinketh upon me. And again *Psal. 34. 6.* This poor man cryed, and the Lord heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles.

Qu. If you ask, why the Lord taketh notice of every of his Saints.

Ans. 1. They are all his Children, and of his household;

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therefore as a tender, and careful Father, and Master, he careth for every one. Yea they are all members of the body of Christ. Now the head taketh care of every member, even the least, and taketh notice of every kindness done to any of them.

2. *They are all by reason of grace in them, as Jewels and precious stones*; therefore as a provident Jeweller he will look to every one of them. Yea that which often appeareth least may be of greater worth; as a little *Diamond* is of more Value than a far greater pebble.

This affordeth a singular ground of comfort to such as in this world are desolate, and forsaken: though they be left alone (as *Elijah was* 1 King 19. 10.) And as a *Pelican in the wilderness*: Or an *Owl of the Desert*, Or as a *sparrow alone upon the house top*, as the Psalmist expresseth, *Psal. 102. 6, 7.* yet is the Lord with them, and takes care of them. Now if the Lord be with us, and taketh care of us, What need we fear? ] How should this encourage us to extend our charity to any one of the Saints, and members of Christ, though mean and little in the world, and not able to recompence us; and though none take notice thereof, to consider that the Lord taketh notice, and will abundantly recompence every good work, yea the least kindness we do unto them. *Heb. 6. 10. God is not unrighteous to forget your work, and labour of love, which ye have shewed towards his name, in that ye have ministered to the Saints, and do minister.* Where, Gods not forgetting their labour of love in ministering to the Saints, doth imply, that as God taketh notice of their beneficence; So he is, and will be ever mindful of such and such persons to support and succour, and every way do them good.

And if God will thus remember those that remember the least of his, how will he take it that they are neglected? Beloved, how is it with Gods little ones at this day? Is it not very low with many of them? God takes notice how very low it is; and whether you will or no, God will not forsake them; but (that I may use the words of *Mordecai to Esther*, with some variation, (*Esther.*

4. 14.) If you altogether hold your hand at this time, relief shall arise to them some other way, but you and your house (take heed that word be not verified upon you) shall be destroyed. But who knows whether you are come to your estates for such a time as this?

And thus I come to the second and main point of *Doctrine*, which riseth from the reward promised to such as shew the least kindness to a *minister*, or *righteous man*, though it be but a cup of cold water they shall in no wise lose their reward. Whence we may observe.

2. Doct. That the least work of charity shewed to a Minister or righteous man, shall be abundantly recompensed, and that not only hereafter, but likewise here on earth.

Though our beneficence ought to extend unto all who are in want and come within the verge of our knowledge, and power, as Gal. 6. 10. According as we have opportunity, let us do good unto ALL men; yet I confine my discourse here to Ministers, and righteous ones, because they only are implied under those little ones mentioned in my text.

That merciful men shall be abundantly recompenced hereafter in heaven for their works of charity, there is no doubt, being so clearly expressed in the word of God, Luk. 16. 9. Make your selves friends of the Mammon of unrighteousness, that when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations, And 1 Tim. 6. 17. Charge them that are rich in this world, that they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate, laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold of eternal life.

But the great question is concerning temporal reward, Whether Christian charity, rightly perform'd, shall be recompenced here in this life with temporal blessings; So that what men give in a way of charity, there is ground to expect, it shall be here returned into their bowles again with increase.

I deny not but a charitable man may become poor, and be reduced into some straights, through Suretyship, negligence in his Calling, or in respect of some secret sin, wherein he liveth, which may justly bring a temporal

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poral curse upon him: So that his liberality in such cases may not be a sufficient fence against want and penury. But this I say, *That a penuriousness towards the poor is the readiest way to poverty: So Christian charity, rightly performed, is the surest way to plenty and abundance, it being usually rewarded with temporal blessings here, as well as with eternal hereafter.* Where is the man to be found, that is the poorer by what he hath given to the poor? How many are the instances of such which have met with some *signal blessings* from God in this life, as the reward of their liberality?

This may seem a *paradox* to many uncharitable men, that *Giving should be the surest way of getting*, and that *the more liberal any man is, the more likely he is to thrive and prosper in the world.* Yet nothing more clearly laid down in the Scripture, and found to be true by the experience of multitudes of Gods people in all ages. And I am verily perswaded, that there is seldom any man, that maketh conscience of this duty, who giveth out to the poor proportionably to what God hath bestowed on him, and with an honest, upright heart, but if he do observe the passages of Gods providence towards him, he shall find the same doubled, and redoubled upon him in temporal blessings, I dare challenge all the world to give me one instance, or at least any considerable number of instances of any truly merciful men, whose charity hath undone them. But as *living wells* the more they are drawn, the more freely they spring, and flow; So the substance of charitable men doth oftentimes, if not ordinarily, multiply in the very distribution; Even as the five loaves, and few fishes did multiply in their breaking and distributing. And the widdows Oyl increased by the pouring it out.

But these bare assertions being no full convictions: For the better clearing the truth of this doctrine, I shall prove it by *Scriptures, Examples and Reasons.*

1. For *Scripture proofs*, there are very many both in the Old and New Testament. What the Apostle saith of *Godliness*, 1 Tim. 4. 8. *It is profitable unto all things, having the promise of this life, and of that which is to come.* The like I may say of *Charity*, It is profitable unto



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unto all things, having promises of temporal blessings, as well as of *Spiritual* and *eternal*.

Deut. 15. 10. *Thou shalt surely give unto thy brother, and thy heart shall not be grieved when thou givest unto him; because that for this the Lord thy God shall bless thee in all thy works, and in all that thou puttest thine hand unto.* It is not thine own labour, or care, but the divine blessing that maketh rich, and of that blessing behold here's a *Scripture-entail* upon the liberal. And the like we have Pro. 3. 9, 10. *Honour the Lord with thy substance, by giving out a portion thereof for the relief of the poor, So shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and as thy barns, so thy Shop, thy Cellars, warehouses, where thou bestowest thy goods, shall be filled with abundance: and thy presses shall burst out with new wine,* this seemeth to be an hyperbolical expression, yet it signifieth no less then this, *that Gods usual way is to make good returns of all we lay out upon him and his;* and that our wisest way both for enluing, and improving what we have is to make our selves Creditors to his wanting Saints.

A compassionate heart, and an helping hand will gather by expending; such giving is getting, such bounty is the most compendious way to plenty. Whereupon the wiseman addeth, Pro. 11. 24. *There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth; there is that withholdeth more then is meet, but is rendereth to poverty.* Who is he here that scattereth? not he that wastes his estate upon his throat, his back and his belly, or with the *Prodigal* upon *Harlots*; but he that casteth his bread upon the waters, as the expression is Eccl. 11. 1. *He that disperseth and giveth to the poor,* as Psal. 112. 9. this is the scatterer in that text. And what of him? is he wasted? is he impoverished? Behold the quite contrary: the man is grown rich, *he is increased by scattering.* Let him look to it, that withholdeth more than is meet: this is the more likely man of the two to be found shortly on the dunghil. If thou wilt secure thy self from beggary, keep not God's beggars from thy door, nor send them away empty whole needs, though not their tongues, try in thine ears, *Give for the Lord's sake.* Fear not

to loose by laying out. Thy *laying up* what thou shouldst *lay out* hath the most danger in it. The divine curse may wither that in thine hand which thou holdest fast against the divine command.

In the following verse we read farther, *The liberal soul shall be made fat.* The *Soul* is often in Scripture taken to signify the *Man*, and so it is here, and is the same, as the *liberal man*. *To be made fat*, signifies to prosper, to be full, and abound, or to grow rich in this worlds goods; and thus it shall be, if this Scripture may be credited.

The *liberal Soul* ] It is in the *Hebrew*, as you may find it noted in the Margin, *the Soul of blessing*, the merciful man is a blessing, and hath a blessing for such as need him: and he that is a blessing, shall be blessed; the Lord God shall bless him with an increase of his substance, who hath most emptied himself for him, and his. Its true that the *SOUL* of the liberal properly taken, shall be a gainer by his liberality; no more *thriving Christians*, then the *merciful Christians*, what they expend in temporals is abundantly returned in spirituals. But because there is so much of *carnal*, even in too many Christians, and we have need of encouragements suited to our tempers, therefore to our spiritual advantages, which are the greatest these outward encouragements are added as often most taking with our too carnal hearts. So that this is the sense of the place. The liberal man, as the reward and encouragement of his liberality, shall prosper in the world. And as it follows, *He that watereth*, the soul of the needy, his waters shall not fail, but he *shall be watered also himself*. God will give in to him, according as he hath given out to others.

And for their farther encouragement, saith the wise man, Pro. 19. 17. *He that hath pity on the poor, lendeth unto the Lord, and that which he hath given, shall he pay him again.* If that which thou givest be repaid thee again, how can it be said to be lost? Indeed the poor, unto whom thou givest, are not able to repay thee again, yet having such an all-sufficient Surety, as God himself, who hath undertaken the repayment, thou need'st



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need'st not doubt thereof. Oh happy is that man that becomes a Creditor to his Creator, and makes God his debtor ! whose is the earth, and the fulness thereof. Heaven and earth shall be emptied before he shall want a royal payment.

Fear not to be an Usurer, so thou lendest unto God, make him thy debtor, and he will surely pay thee Principal and Interest. Allow him his time (for that he will have) and he will not only pay the debt, but allow thee for the forbearance. The ungodly borroweth, and payeth not again : but this shall never be said of the righteous God : He is just, and will make good payment of whatsoever is lent unto him.

It is true, the Lord loves to deal *upon trust*, and uses to make payment by way of *Returns*. He will be trusted, and those that will not give him credit, let them if they can, put their estates into surer hands. And he uses to pay by the way of *Returns*, it may be neither in the same kind, nor in the same Country. Sometimes 'tis so that he pays not in the same kind, bread for bread, or clothes for clothes, or money for money. Nor possibly may he make his payment in this foreign land, where thou art a Merchant-adventurer, but may give thee his bill of exchange to receive it in thine own Country, that better Country, which is thy home, and inheritance, which shall be the reward of thy works, and labour of love, which thou shewest to his name. And if he do thus, does he thee any wrong? Is it not best for thee that thou receive thy goods at thy home ? Is it any harm to thee to receive Silver for thy Brass, Gold for thy Silver, Rubies for thy Gold, a treasure in Heaven, for thy treasure on Earth? Doubt not that he will be behind hand with thee : yet stick not if thou shouldst be put to it, to wait for payment in full till hereafter : and for the present this thou mayst depend upon from *Prov. 28. 27.* *He that giveth to the poor shall not lack*, he shall have in hand whats needful at least. *He shall not lack* and there may be more in this word, then if he had said, I will presently pay thee all : For all that thou hast, if thou shouldst hold it never so close, cannot secure thee from ever coming

to want; as great as thy abundance is, thou mayst come to want before thou diest. But what thy abundance cannot do, this promise of God can and doth for thee even give thee security that thou shalt never lack.

Again *Ecc. 11. 1. Cast thy bread upon the waters, for thou shalt find it after many days.* By bread is here meant all things necessary for the support of mens lives. And by casting their bread upon the waters, is meant their giving freely of that which they have for the relief of the poor, whose watry eyes bewray their great necessity. And though that which thou bestowest on them, may seem to be as clearly lost and cast away, as that which is thrown down the River, or cast into the Sea, where there is no likelihood of receiving it again, because given to those who can no way recompence thee; whence arose that *Greek Proverb* *εἰς ὕδατος ὀμβρῶσιν.* *Thou sowest upon the water,* which is usually applyed to such as bestow kindneses where they are utterly lost.

*Yet thou shalt find it after many days,* *Lavater in locum* saith, that here is implied a promise of long life to the charitable, that God will lengthen out his days to a good old age. Though this falls out true in many, yet I conceive it not to be here intended, nor to be the meaning of the words, but rather, this, that though thy reward doth not presently appear, yet if thou bestowest thine alms with a sincere heart, it shall not be lost, but certainly be returned into thy bosom with increase.

Yet further saith the Lord by the Prophet *Isa. 58. 7. 8. &c. If thou deal thy bread to the hungry, and bring the poor that are cast out, to thy house, and when thou seest the naked, if thou cover him, and that thou hide not thy self from thine own flesh, by turning thy face from him; Then (see what a gracious promise of signal blessings follow hereupon) shall thy light break forth as the Morning, that is, then shall the night of thine adversity be dispelled, and the day spring of thy prosperity break forth as the Morning-light: and thy righteousness shall go before thee, that is, the fruit and reward of thy charity*

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charity shall be visible to all: the glory of the Lord shall be thy reward, that is, the God of glory shall by his power and providence both go before thee, and follow thee with his blessing. And verse 10. *If thou draw out thy soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul, that is, afford that hearty relief unto him, which shall satisfy his necessity, then shall thy light rise in adversity, thy adversity shall be turned into prosperity: and the Lord shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in droughts as thou didst satisfy the poor mans soul by supplying his wants, so the Lord will supply thee with a sufficiency in the greatest dearth and famine; and make fat thy bones; and thou shalt be as a watered garden, and a little spring of water, whose waters fail not: an emblem of a flourishing and prosperous estate, which doth usually follow, and accompany merciful men.*

Yea our blessed Saviour, Matth. 19. 29. promises that such as for his sake shall this or any other way part with their estates, or any part or portions of them, shall receive an hundred fold here, and inherit eternal life hereafter: here in this life he shall have the return of an hundred fold, which many Christians have found true in their own experience, and with thankfulness to God have acknowledged as much.

And what variety of expressions doth our Saviour use in Luke 6. 38. to assure us of a large reward for all our labour of love shewed to his Ministers, or members? *Give, saith he, and it shall be given to you again, good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over.* For your encouragement unto this duty of giving to the poor, Our Saviour first annexeth a general promise of return, *Give, and it shall be given to you again,* where he giveth you a Bill of his hand, that you shall be no looser by what you give to the poor, but shall be repay'd, and that with advantage, as the following words declare, *you shall have good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over,* which account it good measure, when it is heaped up, but when it is not only heaped up, but pressed down, that is more, but when it is heaped up, pressed down; and then

beaped up, and running over again, who can but say, that this is good measure indeed? Yet thus God deals with merciful men, they shall have mercies and blessings beaped up, pressed down, and running over. How truly then may I take up the words of the Psalmist, *Blessed is he that considereth the poor*; He shall not only be blessed, but he shall have blessings beaped up, and running over! which the Apostle St. Paul expresseth very *Emphatically* by the similitude of reaping and sowing, 2 Cor. 9. 6. *He that soweth sparingly, shall reap sparingly, but he which soweth bountifully, shall reap bountifully.* As men sow, so shall they reap, the more liberally they give to good uses, the more bountifully they shall receive from God: they shall find a plentiful Harvest, as the fruit of all their cost and pains. Dr. Hammond in his practical Catechism, quoting these words of the Apostle, *He that soweth bountifully, shall reap bountifully*, addeth this gloss, *By reaping bountifully, I conceive is meant, not only God's abundant retributions of glory in another world, but even his payments of temporal plenty, and blessings here to those who have been willing to make that Christian Use of that earthly talent committed to their Stewarding.* Thus you see there are so many promises both in the old and new Testament of temporal, as well as of spiritual and eternal blessings to the merciful, that there can be no question made of the truth of the doctrine. And to the expression of the forementioned Doctor; *By all those testimonies from the word of God, both in the new and old Testament, I conceive this Doctrine as clear as any in the Scripture*; "That the promise of temporal plenty to the liberal is so distinct and infallible, that it can be no less than,

1. A very gross ignorance of plain Scripture not to observe it, and

2. An act of arrant infidelity, not to believe it.

Though these proofs of scripture are sufficient to convince any Christian of the truth of the Doctrine, yet for your farther satisfaction, I shall briefly give you the judgment both of some ancient Fathers, and modern Divines concerning the same.

*Non qui habet et servat, sed qui imperit est Dives, et imperitus;*



*impertitio, non autem possessio divines facta.* Clemens Alexand. Pædag. lib. 3. Not he that possesseth wealth, and keeps it by him, but he that distributeth it is rich; neither is it the having, but the laying out of riches, that makes men rich.

*Terrena omnia Servando amittimus, largiendo Servamus.* Isidorus. We lose all earthly things by keeping them, and by giving them away we keep them.

*Lucrum est egenis dare,* saith St. Basil. Its the best way of thriving to give to them that are in want.

*Fecundus est ager pauperum, cito reddit donantibus fructum.* Aug. Sermon de Divite. The field of the poor is very fruitful, and quickly yieldeth an increase to the charitable.

The same Father in his 25 Sermon *de verbis Domini*, brings in Christ speaking thus, *Da mihi eo quod dedi tibi, habuisti me largitorem, fac me debitorem &c.* Give to me of that which I have given to thee; I have been thy benefactor, make me thy debtor, become an Usurer to me, and I will pay thee with advantage. And in one of his Epistles, *Da modicum ut recipias centuplum,* Give a little, and thou shalt receive an hundred fold.

*Da pauperi ut deum videri, quicquid pauperi dederis tu habebis, quod non dederis, habebis aliter.* Give to the poor, and it shall be given to thee. Whatsoever thou givest to the poor, thou securest to thy self: what thou withholdest, another shall possess. *Pet. Raven. Sermon. quodam.*

*Deus his solvit hoc fœnus, scilicet semel in terra, Secundo in celo.* In terra enim eleemosynariis multiplicat opes, in celo autem longe plura, et majora rependit. God twice pays what's lent to him, once in this world, by multiplying the wealth of alms-givers; and then in heaven he pays it over and over. *Cornelius a lapid in Prov. 19. 17.*

Dr. Hammond in his Sermon on *Deut. 26. 12, 13.* layeth down this proposition. 'That alms-giving or mercifuness was never the wasting or lessening of any mans estate, to himself or his posterity, but rather the encreasing of it. And thereupon addeth, if I have delivered a new Doctrine, which will not presently be be-



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believed, such as every Auditor will not consent to, I doubt not but there be plain texts of Scripture, more than one, which will assure every Christian of the truth of it. Consider them at your leisure, *Psal.* 41. 1, 2. *Psal.* 112. all to this purpose. *Pro.* 11. 25. & 12. 9. & 19. 17. & 28. 27. Add to these the words of Christ, *Mark.* 10. 30. which though more generally delivered of any kind of parting with possessions for Christs sake, are applied by St. Hierom: to the words of Solomon. *Pro.* 11. 24. *There is that Scattereth, and yet increaseth, quia centuplum accipium in hoc tempore*, because, saith he, they receive an hundred fold in this world.

All these being put together, must, saith he, (to my understanding) make it as clear to any that acknowledge these for Scripture, as if God should call to a man out of heaven by name, and bid him *relieve that poor man, and he should never be the poorer for it, &c.*

Afterwards in pressing upon his Auditors the duty of Alms giving. "This saith he, *I am resolved on*, 'tis want of belief, and nothing else, that keeps men from the practice of this duty. Could this one Mountain be removed, *the lessening of our wealth*; that alms giving is accused of; could that one Scandal to flesh and blood be kicked out of the way, there is no other Devil would take the unmerciful mans part, no other temptation molest the alms giver.

And let me tell you, that you have no more evidence for *the truth of Christs coming*, for *all the fundamentals of your faith*, on which you are content your Salvation should depend, than such as I have given you for your Security in this point.

Dr. Jeremy Taylor in his *Rules of holy-living*, treating of Alms, *Self.* 8. among other *Motives* thereunto, hath this. "That portion of our estate, out of which a tenth or a fifth, or a twentieth, or some offering to God for Religion, and the poor goes forth, Certainly returns with a great blessing upon all the rest. It is like the effusion of oyl by the *Sidonian woman*, as long as she pours into empty vessels, it could never cease running: Or like the *widows barrel of meal*, it consumes not as long as she fed the prophet. Mr.

Mr. Hilderham in his 22th. Lecture on Psal. 112. speaking of alms-giving, saith. "It is a Duty that God hath made greater promises unto, than to any other alms that a Christian can perform. And three sorts of promises there be that are made unto it. First, That it shall never binder, nor beggar a man; That that is thus given shall not be lost, yea it will return again with advantage and increase: Yea that that is thus given will bring Gods blessing upon all that we have besides, Deut. 15. 10.

Dr. Thomas Jacomb, in his Sermon on Matth. 5. 7. preached at the Spittle 1657. saith, God will return to the Merciful man what he gives to the poor, he will reward him *in kind*; that look whatever it is that he bestows, it shall be *in the very kind* made up to him again; many have found this to be true: in the Morning they have given, may be, five shillings, and before night God hath brought them in unexpectedly twenty for it. *The best way for a man to increase his estate is charity*: Money here like the widdows oil, the more 'tis poured out, the more it doth increase, &c. And p. 26. No man shall be the poorer at the years end for what he lays out upon the poor; you shall have your money again, and improvement for it too.

"The Author of the *whole Duty of man*, treating of Alms in Partition 17. saith, There is but one Objection to be made against a cheerful giver of Alms, &c. that is, *The danger of impoverishing ones self by what one gives.* To which he answers in these words: that this is sure a vain supposition, God having particularly promised the contrary to the charitable: That it shall bring blessings on them, even in these outward things. The liberal soul shall be made fat, and he that watereth shall be watered also himself, Pro. 11. 25. He that giveth to the poor, shall not lack, Pro. 28. 27. And many the like texts there are, so that one may truly say, This Objection is grounded in direct unbelief. The short of it is, we dare not trust God, for this given to the poor, is directly the putting our wealth into his hands: He that giveth to the poor, lendeth unto the Lord, Prov. 19. 17. and that too, on solemn promises of repayment,

## The Surest and Safest

as it follows in that verse, *That which he hath given will he pay him again.* It is amongst men thought a great argument, when we refuse to trust them: it sheweth whether think them not sufficient or not honest. How affront is it then to God, thus to distrust him? Nay more, how horrid blasphemy, to doubt the security of Christ, for which he has thus expressly past his word who is the Lord of all, and therefore cannot be in sufficient, and who is the God of truth, and therefore will not fail to make good his promise? Let not then that infidel-fear of future-want contract and shut up thy bowels from thy poor brother: for though he be never like to pay, yet God becomes his Surety, and enters bond with him, and will most assuredly pay thee with increase.

Therefore it is so far from being damage to thee, Thus to give, that it is *thy great advantage.* Any man would rather chuse to put his money in some sure hand, where he may both improve, and be certain of it at his need, than to let it lye unprofitable by him, especially if he be in danger of thieves, or other accidents, by which he may probably lose it: Now alas! all that we possess is in eminent-danger of losing: innumerable accidents there are, which may in an instant bring a rich man to beggary; he that doubts this, let him but read the story of *Job*, and he will there find an example of it. And therefore what so prudent course can we take for our wealth, as to put it out of the reach of those accidents, by thus lending it to God, where we may be sure to find it ready at our greatest need, and that too with improvement and increase? In which respect it is, that the Apostle compares almes to Seed 2 Cor. 9. 10. We know it is the nature of Seed that is sown, to multiply and increase; and so do all our acts of Mercy, they return not single, and naked to us, but bring in their sheaves with them, a most plenteous and bountiful harvest. God deals not with our almes, as we too often do with his graces, wrap them up in a napkin, so that they shall never bring in any advantage to us, but makes us most rich Returns. And therefore

therefore we have all reason, most cheerfully, you joyfully, to set to this duty, which we have such inducements to, as well in respect of our own *Interest*, as our Neighbours needs.

Thus have you the truth of the point proved by divine, and humane testimonies. I should have proceeded to give you some instances for the farther confirmation thereof. But I must beseech you first to take these two *Cautions*.

1. *Not to ascribe the reward to any merit of your good works, but only to the free grace, and rich mercy of God.* It is his rich mercy, that we have wherewithal to give, and his free grace, that we have an heart to give, and his abundant goodness, that he accepteth our works of charity, and rewardeth them with all sorts of blessings, both temporal, spiritual and eternal; but we cannot merit any thing at his hands by giving him that which is his own.

2. *Though our Alms-deeds are Sacrifices acceptable and well pleasing unto God through Christ; and though he hath bound himself by many gracious promises to reward the same both here, and hereafter: yet far be it from us to perform them merely out of hope of reward, but rather for conscience sake, in obedience to the command of God (who hath required them at our hands) and in testimony of our thankfulness unto him, for what he hath graciously bestowed on us.* As we are commanded to obey the Magistrate, not so much for fear of punishment, and hope of reward, as for conscience sake, in obedience to the command of God, *Rom. 13. 5.* So ought we to distribute our Alms not so much for the reward sake, as out of conscience, for the Lords sake.

I deny not but Christians in their well-doing may for their encouragement have respect to the recompence of reward, but not *only*, and chiefly. The chief and principle Ends we should aim at in all our good works, are, *The Glory of God, And Obedience to his command.* Our respect to the recompence of reward ought to be subordinate unto these. The truth is, This temporal reward should not so much be looked on, as an argument to persuade us to give, but as an answer of an

Objection



## The Surest and Safest

Objection against Giving. Thou wilt be ready to say I may want it my self, or mine may want it. But do but believe, that God will repay thee, and with over plus; and then that doubt will be taken out of the way.

These two Cautions premised, I shall proceed in the confirmation of the point from the examples of many charitable persons, who have in temporal mercies been abundantly recompensed for the kindness they have shewed to the Ministers and Members of Christ.

The widow of *Sareptab* nourished the Prophet *Elisha* in her house during the whole time of famine: and how did the Lord abundantly recompense this her charity, by his miraculous preserving and encreasing her meal and oyl, whereby her family was nourished. As also by restoring her Son to life again, after his Soul was departed? *1 King. 17. 22.* And by causing the Prophet to continue with her many Months, to feed her soul with spiritual, as she had his body, with carnal food.

How abundantly was the *Shunamite's* kindness to the Prophet *Elisha*, recompensed?

1. By the gift of a Son after long barrenness.
2. By restoring her Son to life again when he was dead.
3. *King. 16.*
3. By forewarning her of a famine approaching. *2 King. 4. 1, 4.*
4. By the restoring of her house and land, lost in her long absence; by reason of the famine, *2 King. 4. 24.*

Notable is the instance of *Job*. What a merciful man he was, we may read chap. 29. 12, 13, 15. I delivered the poor that cried, and the fatherless, and him that had none to help him. The blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon me, and I caused the widows heart to sing for joy. I was eyes to the blind, and feet I was to the lame, I was a father to the poor. And chap. 31. 16. & 22. If I have withheld the poor from their desire or have caused the eyes of the widow to fail, or have eaten my morsel alone, and the fatherless hath not eaten thereof; If I have seen any perish for want of cloathing, or any poor without covering; If his loyns have not blessed me, and



## Way of Thriving.

*If he were not warmed with the fleece of my sheep: Then let mine arms fall from my shoulder-blade, and mine arm be broken from the bone. I have transcribed his words thus at large, that I might set this worthy pattern before the readers eyes.*

But you will say, what became of this merciful man? did he prosper? did he flourish, and grow great, who so poor as poor *Job* after all these acts of mercy? How long after was it, that we find this *merciful man* a miserable man, strip'd naked of all that ever he had. But, First, It was not *his own mercy*, but *Satan* that brought him down: It was the *Devil* that led the *Sabeans*, and *Chaldeans*, upon him, to plunder, and carry away all that he had. And Secondly, what became of *Job* afterwards, after *Satan* had done his worst? you may read, chap. 42. 10. &c. *That the Lord turned the Captivity of Job, and gave him twice so much as he had before, and blessed his latter end more than his beginning, for he had fourteen thousand sheep, and six thousand Camels: a thousand yoke of Oxen, and a thousand she asses; He had also seven Sons, and three daughters.*

*Act. 28. 7.* We read how *Publius* the chief man of the Island of *Melita* (into which *St. Paul*, and many others with him were cast by Ship-wrack) received and lodged them three days courteously: and in the next verse we read how the father of *Publius*, when he lay desperately sick of a fever, and bloody-flux, was recovered by *St. Paul*, and restored to his former health. So likewise the kindness which the barbarous people of that Island shewed unto *Paul* and his fellow-Travelers, was recompensed with the cure of many of their sick bodies.

To these Examples, recorded in Scripture, I shall add a few more out of ancient, and modern writings.

*St. Aban* (whom *Mr. Fox* in his first Tome mentioneth amongst the Martyrs who suffered for the name and cause of Christ) having received a poor persecuted Minister into his house, was by his godly life, and gracious exhortations so wrought upon, that he turned from *Heathenism* to *Christianity*, and at last suffered as a Martyr for the truth of Jesus Christ, as *Beda*, and others write of him. His kindness to a poor persecuted

## The Surest and Safest

and Minister was recompensed not only with his conversion to the true religion, but likewise with the honour of Martyrdom.

St. *Austin*, having set forth the mercifulness and liberality of *Constantine* the great, saith, *Bonus Deus, Constantinum Magnum tantis terrenis implevit muneribus,* God gave *Constantine*, that Merciful Prince, more wealth than heart could wish, for his bounty to the poor, *Aug. de Civitate Dei. l. 5.*

Dr. *Hammond* in his formentioned Treatise mentioneth an ancient Story out of *Cedrenus*, of a Jew, who upon reading those words of *Solomon, Prov. 19. 17. He that hath pity upon the poor, lendeth unto the Lord, and that which he hath given will he pay him again,* resolved to try, whether God would be as good as his word: thereupon gave all that he had but two pieces of silver to the poor and then waited and expected to see it come again. But being not presently answered in that expectation, grew angry, and went up to *Jerusalem* to expostulate with God for not performing his promise. And going on his way, found two men a striving, engaged in an unreasonable quarrell about a Stone, that both walking together had found in the way, and so had both equal right to it: but (seeing but one and not capable of being divided) they could not both enjoy: and therefore, to make the friends, he having two pieces of Silver, doth upon contract divide them betwixt the Contenders, and hath the Stone in exchange for them. Having it, he goes on his journey, and coming to *Jerusalem*, shews it the Goldsmith who tells him, that it was a Jewel of great Value, being a Stone salue, and lost out of the high-Priests Ephod, to whom if he carried it, he should certainly receive a great reward. He did so, and accordingly it proved. The high Priest took it of him, gave him a great reward, and withal sharply reprov'd him for questioning the truth of Gods promises, bidding him trust God the next time.

The story of *Tiberius* the second is pertinent to this purpose, which take in the words of that Reverend

Person before-mentioned in his Sermon at the Spittle. This *Tiberius* was very famous for his bounty to the poor, insomuch that his wife was wont to blame him for it, and speaking to him once, how he wasted his treasure that way, he told her. *He should never want money, so long as in obedience to Christs Command he did supply the necessities of the poor.* And presently see how providence ordered it! Immediately after he had given much this way, under a marble table which was taken up, he found a great treasure, and news was brought him too of the death of one *Nurses*, a very rich man, who had given his whole Estate unto him.

Famous is the story of that charitable Bishop of *Milan*, who as he was travelling with his Servant, overtook some poor people who begged an alms of him: whereupon he asked his man what money he had about him, who answered *Three crowns*, which he commanded him to give unto them: but the servant thinking himself wiser than his Master, gave them but two crowns, not knowing what occasions they might have for money before they got home. Not long after Some Noble men meeting the Bishop, and knowing him to be a very charitable man, appointed *two hundred Crowns* to be paid to the Bishops Servant for his Masters use. The Servant having received the money, presently with great joy acquainted his Master therewith, whereupon said the Bishop, Thou mayst now see how in wronging the poor of their due, by keeping back the third crown which I intended them, thou hast likewise wronged me, *Si enim tres dedisset, trecentos accepisses*, &c. If thou hadst given those *three Crowns* I commanded thee to give, thou hadst received *three hundred Crowns* whereas now I have but *two*. *Melan. apud Job. Manlium in Loc. Com.*

It is recorded of *Mary* the wife of *Alexander Farnese*, Prince of *Parma*, that being childless, she conceived a hope, that if she would take into her house some *Orphan*, or poor mans child, and there train him up, God would bestow a Son upon her. Whereupon she took a poor mans Son into her care, and gave order for his education and according to her expectation.

at nine Months and she was delivered of a Son.  
 Suitable likewise to this point is the story of one *John Stewart* Provost of *Air* in *Scotland*, who was eminent for piety and charity. He had a considerable estate left him by his Father; of which he gave a great part to the poor and other charitable uses. To pass by many, I shall mention only one. His heart on a time being much affected with the wants and necessities of many of Gods people, who were in a suffering condition, he sendeth for divers of them to *Edinburgh*, where being met, and some time spent in prayer, he made them promise not to reveal what he was about to do, so long as he lived: and then told them he was not ignorant in what a low condition many of them were, and therefore he had brought some money with him to lend each of them, yet so as they should never offer to repay it till he required the same; Soon after this, such a plague-brake forth in *Air*, the place of his abode, that trade much decayed, and he himself with others were reduced to straits. Whereupon Some of the Profane in that place derided him, saying, that Religion had made him poor, and his giving so much to others, like a fool, had brought him to want, But mark what followed. Having borrowed a little money, he departs from *Air* to *Rochel* in *France*, where *Salt* and other commodities being exceeding cheap for want of trading, he adventured to fraught a ship, and loaded her upon Credit; and then went back again through *England* unto *Air* in *Scotland*, having ordered the ship to come thither. But after long expectation he was, informed for certain, that his ship was taken by a Turkish man of war, the report whereof did exceedingly afflict him, not because he knew not how to be abased, as well as how to abound, but out of fear, that the mouths of wicked men would be the more opened to the reproaching of his profession and charity. But Soon after, tidings was brought him that his ship was safely arrived in the Road, and upon his going forth saw it was a truth. And through Gods good Providence, as a reward of his charity, he made so much of the Commodities in the ship, that after the payment of his debts,



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debts, he had twenty thousand marks left for himself. Though his bread was cast upon the waters, and to appearance lost, yet after many days it returned to him with great advantage. This Story I lately read in a book, called, The fulfilling of the Scriptures.

*Daniel Waldow* Esquire, Citizen and Merchant, who was chosen Alderman of London, is a further proof of this Doctrine before laid down, I could from mine own experience speak much of his bounty and charity; as also of that plentiful estate wherewith God blessed him thereupon. But I shall rather give it you in the words of that holy man, and blessed servant of Christ in the work of the Ministry, Mr. James Nelson, now with God, who was more intimately acquainted with Mr. Waldow, and therefore the more fit to preach his Funerall Sermon, and to set forth his life for our Imitation. His words are these, *He was a man eminent, and exemplary in the grace of Charity; as appeared by his great bounty manifested on every occasion. Never any good man, Minister or other, came to propound any work of Charity, publick or private, that needed to do any more than to propound it: For his heart was so set upon works of mercy, that he prevented importunity, by his Christian and Heroick liberality. He made no more of giving ten pounds to a work of Charity, than many other rich men make of giving ten shillings. His Charity had two singular concomitants, which made it the more remarkable and praise worthy.*

1. *He did good while he lived: He carried his Lanthorn before him: He made his own hands his Executors, and his own eyes his Overseers: Some will part with their riches when they can keep them no longer: This is like a Cup purse, that being espyed or pursued, will drop a purse of gold, because he can keep it no longer. But to be doing good in our lifetime, while we have opportunity; this is an act of Faith, and an evidence that we can trust God with our estate, and our Children, that he will provide for them, when our heads are laid in the grave.*

2. *He dispensed his Charity so secretly, without any self-seeking, or pharisaical vain-glory, that his left hand did not know what his right hand did. Therefore did he often go with an hundred pounds under his cloak to some needy friends,*



friends, desiring them to distribute it among such honest poor people as stood in most need of relief.

In brief, He did so much good while he lived, as if he meant to have nothing to do when he died : And yet he gave so largely when he came to die, as if he had done no good when he lived.

Many, I know, are apt to say, they have many children, and therefore cannot give. So bad Mr. Waldow ; He had nine children alive at his death, but the providing for them was no obstruction to his Charity, nor prejudice to his Children, but did rather entail a blessing upon them.

Mr. John Walter, Citizen and Draper of London, was signally charitable, not only at his death, but in the whole course of his life, even from his younger years. For the avoiding of vain-glory, his manner was, to send considerable Sums of money to several poor families, by the hands of others, in whose faithfulness he could confide. Whereupon God did not only bless him with a large estate, but likewise gave him such contentedness therein, that he sat down abundantly satisfied: and made a solemn vow and promise unto God, that he would give the surplusage of his estate, whatever it was that for the future should accrew unto him from his calling and employments, to charitable uses. That you may be assured of the truth thereof, I have here given you his own expressions transcribed out of his last Will and Testament, which are as follows.

*I thought fit to declare, that about twenty years past, when the Lord had entrusted me with a convenient estate, sufficient to maintain my charge, and afford fit portions for my wife and children after my decease ; I resolved that what so ever estate the Lord should be pleased to entrust me with, to bestow the same on charitable uses.*

After this vow finding his estate wonderfully increased, he began to build Alms-houses ; one in the Parish of St. George in Southwark ; another in St. Mary Newington ; because in those Parishes he observed, there were many blind, lame, distressed, poor people, and never an Alms house in them. He likewise built a Chapel near one of his Alms-houses for the poor people to serve God in daily. Having built his Alms houses,

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the *poors stock*, he bought *Lands and Houses of Inheritance*, which he settled upon the Company of *Traders*, as for the relief and support of his *Alms-people* after his decease; so for the performing other charitable gifts mentioned in his last Will and Testament. While he lived, he was wont to go himself once a month to his *Alms-houses* in his worst clothes (that he might not be suspected to be the Founder of them) and give unto the poor people their promised allowance. Doubtless, that is the best Charity, which *Nilus* like, with the several *streams thereof seen*, but the *fountain concealed*. Having built his *Alms-houses*, endowed them with a good revenue; then with the remainder of his *poors stock* (which daily encreased through God's blessing upon his pains and endeavours in his calling) relieved *poor people*, and *families* with considerable sums of money; and gave *much bread weekly* to the *poor* of several *Out Parishes*. All this he did whilst he was living; besides what he gave upon the account at his death; which was also very considerable, as further appears by his Will. Notwithstanding all which, he gave and left to his Wife and his two Daughters about ten thousand pounds. This questionless is the surest way to have our *WILLS* performed, to see them performed in our life-time; in regard that many *Executors* prove *Executioners* of *WILLS*.

*William Pennoyer Esquire, Citizen and Merchant of London* a person wholly composed of *Mercy* and *goodness*, *bounty* and *liberality*, which he expressed in the whole course of his life, even from his first setting up in the world. Many years before his death, he turned a great part of the stock wherewith he traded, into *Lands and Inheritance*, to the value of *four hundred pounds per annum*; and being eminently charitable, he lived as frugally as he could, spending about two hundred pounds a year upon himself, wife and family; and the remaining part of his incomes, he wholly bestowed on charitable uses; as I have been informed by those who lived long with him, and were nearly related to him. To give you a clear demonstration of his Christian Charity,

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To give you a clear demonstration of his Christian Charity,



Charity, and of God's recompensing the same him here in this life with temporal blessings; I recite some of his *Legacies* bequeathed in his last and Testament, to charitable uses, passing by such as he gave to his rich kindred and acquaintance.

To poor Ministers, Widows, and others in distress  
house 150 l.

To four of his poor Tenants 20 l.

Likewise 800 l. to be laid out here in Wollen Cloth and other commodities, to be sent to New-England, for use of his poor kindred there. ||

He gave to certain Trustees Lands to the value of 100 pounds per annum, to pay for the teaching of forty Boys in a School.

To Bristol 54 l. per annum towards the mainenance of a School master, and Lecturer, to preach a week-day Lecture there; and to other charitable uses.

He likewise settled 20. l. per annum on Trustees, for the teaching of forty poor children in or near White-Chapel: And 40 s. yearly to buy Bibles for some of the children.

He gave 12 l. per annum for the mainmaining a Scholar as the day in Brecknockshire: And 40 s. more yearly to buy Books for the Scholars.

As also 10 l. per annum for the maintenance of distressed people in the Hospital of Bethlehem in London. And 10 l. per annum to ten of the blindest, oldest and poorest Cloth-workers, at the discretion of the Master, Wardens and Assistants of the said Company for the time being.

He gave 40 l. per annum to Christ Church-Hospital for the placing out four children yearly: And 40 s. more yearly to buy each of the children a Bible.

Besides these, he gave to his poor kindred above two thousand pounds by his Will.

And by a Codicil annexed therunto, he bequeathed certain Trustees a thousand pounds to be given to some poor people; as also 300 l. for releasing poor prisoners, which Sums have been paid into the hands of the Trustees by Mr. Richard Loton, and Michael Davison Esqrs. who to their honour have approved themselves faithful Executors and tutors to this charitable Will.



## Way of Thriving.

*Thomas Arnold, Clergyman and Haberdasher of London:* His first setting up for himself, his stock was not great; but being charitably disposed, and ready to do any good work, his estate, through God's blessing, very much encreased.

His Charity in his life-time appeared not only by his forwardness to communicate to the relief of such, whom he saw in want; but likewise his frequent enquiring of others, after such poor people as were over-burthened with children, or otherwise distressed. Yea, he hired men with money, to make it their business to find out the poorest poor people, on whom he might bestow his charity; and likewise did entrust others with considerable Sums of money, to distribute among the poorest, charging them to have special respect to the poorest poor, such whom they conceived did truly fear God. That he was no *loser*, but a *gainer* by his liberality, appeareth, in that God so blessed him in his Calling; that he attained to an *Alderman's* estate, and was chosen to that Office. Yea, he gave over his Calling in the City, and withdrew himself into the Country, that he might the better mind God, and the concerns of his soul more, and the world with its concerns less.

*John Clark, Doctor of Physick*, one of great reputation for his *Learning, Piety and Charity*: Some while *Professor* of the *Colledge of Physicians*. His custom was, to pay by all his *Lord's-Day* fees, as a *sacred stock* for charitable uses; devoting that entirely to God, which he received on *his day*; accounting it a piece of *sacrilege* to appropriate it to himself, or any common use; whereupon the Lord was pleased so to prosper him in his Calling, that though at first his practice was little, and his estate not very great, yet afterwards his practice so encreased, and the world so flowed in upon him, that he lived *plentifully and comfortably*, and gave to his children liberal portions.

The like also was practised by *John Barburst, Doctor of Physick*, with whom I was very well acquainted: His *Lord's Days* fees were constantly kept as a *bank for the poor*, and wholly devoted to, and imployed for their

their use; which was so far from lessening his income that by the blessing of God upon his practice, they were greatly in few years augmented by it. For though his first coming to *London*, he brought little estate with him, and here had small acquaintance, *Torkshire* being his native Country, where he had spent his former days; yet the Lord was pleased so to prosper him in his Calling, that in twenty years time he purchased *Land of Inheritance*, to the value of a thousand pounds per annum to speak what I know to be certain; For in the reputed some, his estate at his death was no less than two thousand pounds of yearly value.

*Dr. Edmond Trench* likewise observed the same course as his wife, and divers other friends of his do testify. And certain it is, that this was no *damage*, but a great *advantage* to him: For he had as many Patients as his weakbody would permit him to visit. And, though he lived at a full and plentiful rate, frequently and cheerfully entertaining Ministers and Scholars at his Table; yet did he gain a very considerable estate, which he left to his wife and children; in whom not only his memory, but his Piety still survives.

I have good ground to believe, that many other Physicians do make conscience of this duty; but oh that all would do the like! certainly they would be no losers thereby at the years end, but find God's blessing upon their Calling and Estates prospering them in both.

And here to me occurs a *Case of Conscience* worthy to be enquired into, *viz. Whether Physicians may lawfully appropriate unto their own private use their Lord's-Days fees*; I mean, those fees which they receive from their Patients on the Sabbath day?

I deny not but works of mercy may, and ought to be done on that day; for, saith the Lord, *Matth. 9. 13. I will have mercy, and not sacrifice*; that is, mercy rather than sacrifice. And I deny nor, but, of the richer sort, especially, they may receive their fees for their pains. But I much question whether they may appropriate those fees to themselves: In regard the Lord hath afforded us six days of seven, wherein we may and ought to follow our Callings, for our own livelihood, and of those who belong unto us; but hath sanctified and set apart

apart the Christian Sabbath for his own honour and service : And therefore it seemeth but reasonable that what accreus unto us on that day, should be set apart and employed for his more immediate use and service. But I will not impose this as a necessary duty, at least upon all, in regard that circumstance may vary; but leave it at present to the determination of their own consciences who are most concerned therein.

*Samuel Dunche* of *Pusey*, in the County of *Berks*, Esquire, a person that according to the *Apostle's* rule, did good to all, but especially to those of the household of Faith. His custom was to send moneys yearly to several Towns as to *Stow* upon the *Woolds* in *Glocestershire*, to *Norliche*, to *Lamburn*, and others not here mentioned, for the relief of their poor. And upon the last here named, he settled Lands of Inheritance for ever for the same use. And to *Rumsey* in *Hampshire* he gave by Deed upon the like account a Lease of 99 years to commence after his decease. The poor also of the said Town, whom he call'd his *Alms-people*, had during his life, weekly relief from him, and many other Towns together with them, were large sharers in the like bounty.

Several poor children of the said Town, and likewise of those belonging to *Farringdon* he set to School, and did not only pay for their teaching; but also furnished them with all such books as were fit and convenient for them. He also caused several good books to be printed at his own charge, which he freely gave to the poor, that they might the better be encouraged to read, and to acquaint themselves with the concerns of another and better life.

He further gave considerable Sums of money yearly for the constant supply of such godly Ministers as he knew to be in want : And upon several of them he settled considerable Annuities, 10*l.* 20*l.* per annum for their lives, besides such Legacies which were not small, that he gave to some of them at his death.

Besides all this, his hand was ever open and ready to distribute when ever any fit occasion was offered to him; yea, such as the enlargement of his heart, and tenderness of his bowels, that he could hardly pass by any whom he judged due objects of his Charity, but he freely

freely and bountifully contributed to their relief.

Thus did this pious Gentleman honour God with his substance, and adventure upon the royal Prophet's words, *to cast his bread upon the waters*; which though the unbelieving world accounts but folly, and usually reckon it amongst their losses yet *it is to his advantage, according to the promise thereto annexed, found is a gain not after many days*: This bread, like the loaves with which Christ fed the multitude, was multiplied in his hands, and his oyle encreased by pouring out. He was but a younger Brother, and the Estate settled upon him was but 800 *l. per annum*, or thereabouts: And yet notwithstanding, I had almost said, this excess of Charity, his Estate was so far from being ruined, or in the least impaired, as that not only the same bare measure he received, but *much greater, pressed down, and running over, was meted out to him and his posterity*. So signally did God in this life reward his charity, wisely ordering by his good providence, that one way or other large handfuls, as over-measure, were from several hands thrown into his bushel. There is now left to his Heirs an Estate of more than the double value of what he received from his Father, besides the portions which he gave to all his *Daughters*, five in number, which were very considerable, to some of them more than 2000 *l.*

And here I hope I may, without offence, or vain glory, take liberty to mention, amongst others, the *Charity and Liberality* of my dear and honoured Father Dr. *William Gouge*, late *Pastor of Black-fryers, London*, who was eminent as in other graces, so in that of Charity; from him I first heard, *The tenth part of a rich mans estate to be a fit proportion to be devoted and dedicated to God for charitable uses*. But though he commended that to others; yet by what I find in some papers written with his own hand, I may truly say, He gave the *seventh part of all his yearly comings in*, towards the maintaining poor Scholars at the University, and the relieving poor families, and distressed persons. And how wonderfully God blessed, as his *Ministry*, so his *outward Estate*, is so well known to all who lived in his days, that



I suppose it needless for me to say any thing thereof only I may truly apply unto him the words of the *Psalmist*, *He was ever merciful and lending, and his seed is blessed.*

Many more instances of the like nature might here be added; some of persons who are now with joy reaping in the other world the blessed fruit of that seed which they had so plentifully sown in this: Others of persons yet living amongst us, some of which have acknowledged to me, *That God hath already rewarded them an hundred-fold for what they have lent to him, by giving it to his poor.* But these already mentioned, may be abundantly sufficient to evidence the truth in hand, and to encourage and provoke us in imitation of those worthies, to a more ready and conscientious practice of this great duty, so essential to Christianity, so well pleasing to God, so creditable to our profession, so beneficial, not only in order to our eternal happiness, but our present gain, comfort and prosperity here on earth.

The point being thus proved by *Scriptures* and *Examples*, Come we now to the Reasons for the further confirmation thereof.

1. Reason. *May be taken from the goodness and bounty of God*, which is such, that he will not suffer any work of Charity, shewed to any of his Ministers, or Children to pass away unrewarded, without a full recompence. Whereupon saith *David*, *Psalm 62. 12. Unto thee, O Lord, belongeth mercy, for thou renderest to every man according to his work.* Though God doth not render a reward to any man for his work done, yet doth he render to every man according to his work. Yea God doth always exceed in his remunerations, to give evidence of his grace and bounty. God will not be in any mans debt long, but what he hath disbursed upon his account, he will speedily return into his bosom with advantage.

2. Reason 2. *May be taken from the faithfulness and righteousness of God*, who having in his word graciously promised abundantly to recompence and reward our beneficence, his faithfulness and righteousness ingageth him to make good what he hath promised; So that he cannot but be as good as his word. Men may be forward in promising, but slow in performing: but with God, who is the true and faithful one, *dictum est factum*,  
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laying and doing, are both alike. *All his promises are Yea and Amen in Christ Jesus*, Heb. 6. 10. saith the Apostle, *God is not unrighteous to forget your work, and labour of love, which ye have shewed towards his name, in that ye have Ministered to the Saints, and do Minister.* Here the Apostle argueth a certainty of reward to those who minister any thing to the Saints from the *righteousness of God*, even because he is righteous, and therefore will not fail to do what he hath promised. He is not unrighteous to **FORGET**, that is, he will righteously remember; and Gods remembering, signifies the same as recompencing: as he will remember sinners by recompencing their evil ways upon their own heads, so he will remember his Saints by returning the good that they have done into their own bloms.

The more to assure us of such kind of remembrance from God, the holy Ghost mentioneth certain *books, or roles of remembrance written before God*, wherein the merciful deeds of his servants are recorded. So that it is no more possible that such as are charitably benign, and helpful to the poor Ministers, and people of God should lose their reward, than that God himself should cease to be righteous, or be forgetful of his word.

3. Reason. *May be taken from several metaphorical expressions used in Scripture, by which Alms-giving is represented to us*; all which imploy not only a certain return, but that with increase, as **SOWING**, and **LENDING**, and that upon Usury.

1. *We find it set forth in Scripture by SOWING*, 2 Cor. 9. 6. *He which soweth sparingly, shall reap sparingly: and he which soweth bountifully, shall reap bountifully.* This proverbial speech the Apostle applyeth to the dispersing of alms. Now as *Husbandmen*, who sow their corn with a liberal hand, do usually reap a crop answerably thereunto: In like manner, such Christians as shall sow their seed of charity with an open, plentiful hand, shall reap accordingly a plentiful crop, they shall find their seed sown come up with increase, yielding *thirty, if not sixty, or an hundred fold bene*, besides eternal life hereafter. It may be, thou mayst not presently reap the fruit of thy seed, and what wonder? Who is there that sowes, who expects to reap

reap the same day? The Husbandman waiteth for his harvest; wait thou on the Lord, and doubt not but an harvest will come, that will pay thee both for thy sowing, and thy waiting.

2. The second *Metaphor* whereby alms-giving is set forth in Scripture is *LENDING*, and that upon use, *Pro. 19. 17. He that hath pity on the poor lendeth unto the Lord, and that which he hath given, will he pay him again.* Men that lend to men receive their own with increase: what they lay up lies dead, and possibly the Thief may break in, and steal it away; but what they lend if to sure hands, comes in with advantage. How rich do some Usurers grow by this trade of lending? And tho' it be a *Paradox*, that *GIVING* is a richer trade than *Lending*, even upon use: yet 'tis a certain truth: for *this giving* is *lending*: and he that lends to the Lord will find a greater income at the years end, then he that lends to the best of men. Therefore as one well saith, *Eleemosyna non est divitiarum dispendium, sed ditescendi potius compendium, quæstusq; omnium uberimus*; Giving to the poor is not the way to waite our wealth, but the art of thriving, and the most compendious course to attain unto riches. Though our alms-deeds seem (as the seed sown) to perish, and rot; yet believing what we see not, we shall assuredly see, what we believe, and find (even here) such a fruitful increase, as we shall conclude, *that Giving to charitable uses is the surest and safest way of getting, and thriving in the world.*

Thus have you the truth of the point confirmed by *Scriptures, Example* and *Reasons*. Come we now to the application.

1. *Use of Reproof of all unmerciful men*; who notwithstanding the many charges God hath laid upon us, to be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willingly to communicate, to draw forth our souls to the hungry, to open our bowels to the needy; and the manifold encouragements he hath given us in his word hereto, yet do shut up their bowels of compassion from them, refusing to afford them any succour or relief. Surely such have no love to Christ: for who can say he loves the Lord Jesus Christ in truth and sincerity, when he suffers his Ministers and members to want necessities, even food and rayment? 1.

thou thy love to Christ, to suffer him to starve? It is evident thou lovest thy money more than Christ, and so comest under that fearful *Anathema*, 1 Cor. 16. 22. If any love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be *Anathema Maranatha*: These two words though both denoting a curse, are of two several languages. The former word *Anathema*, is a *Greek* word signifying *accursed*; So it is used *Rom.* 9. 3. *Gal.* 1. 8. The latter is a *Syrack* word, as *Beza* observeth in his Anotations on 1 Cor. 16. 22. yet frequently used by the *Jews*: it signifieth, *Our Lord cometh*. *Maran* is Our Lord, and *atha* cometh; intimating that such as were under this curse, were to expect no mercy, but to look for the dreadful coming of Christ to take vengeance of them. So that, as *St. James* speaketh, chap. 2. 13. *Such shall have Judgment without Mercy, that shewed no mercy*. How do they think to find mercy from Christ who never shewed mercy to him, and his!

I will not condemn all for unmercifulness (God forbid I should) many there are (and I would to God they were more) who do contribute bountifully to the necessities both of Ministers, and other poor Saints of God. But yet I have too great cause to say, that the greatest part of rich men amongst us have their hearts hardened and their bowels shut up, that they cannot compassionate their wants; and their hands withered, like his in the Gospel, that they cannot reach them out to any good use.

Oh that such would consider, that unmercifulness is a greater sin than they do imagine. It was one of *Sodom*s sins which fetched down fire and brimstone from heaven upon them, and all their Children, *Ezek.* 16. 49. Uncharitable men are cursed as in their life so at their death: but most cursed will they be at the day of Judgment. Being barren fruitless trees in Gods Orchard, they shall with the barren fig-tree be surely cut down, and cast into unquenchable fire.

More particularly to shew you the miseries of uncharitable persons.

1. *They are accursed here in every thing: all they have is cursed*: So much is implied in that expression of our Saviour, *Luke* 11. 41. *Give alms of such things as you have*



have, and all things are clean unto you, but without almsgiving nothing is clean unto you, that is, nothing is blessed, and sanctified unto you, but all things are defiled and cursed. Not only your crosses are curses, but your blessings are curses unto you. So God threatneth, *to curse their very blessings*, Mal. 2. 2. Though thou enjoyest abundance of this worlds goods, yet so long as thou art hard-hearted to the poor and needy, the curse of God cleaves to thy store, and abundance. Oh how sad and lamentable must thy condition needs be, when those things which are not only blessings in themselves, but likewise blessed unto others, should be cursed unto thee! Surely, To be thus accursed is misery enough.

2. *As the unmerciful are cursed here, so shall they be cursed hereafter.* Jam. 2. 13. *He shall have Judgment without mercy, that hath shewed no Mercy.* Such as have shut up their bowels of compassion against the necessities of the poor, God will shut up his bowels of compassion against them, and let forth his fury upon them, they shall have their portion in his plagues, and indignation, without the least drop of pittie or Mercy. And at the day of Judgment Christ will say unto them, *Math. 25. 41. Depart from me ye cursed into everlasting fire prepared for the Devil and his Angels*, There's their doom; and why? *For I was an hungry, and ye gave me no meat, I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink.* Oh dreadful sentence! every word whereof carieth much terrour in it, and breatheth nothing but fire and Brimstone. What! must they depart from Christ the fountain of blis and happiness? and into everlasting fire? Ah wretches! cursed indeed. For as the Prophet speaketh *Isa. 33. 14. Who can dwell with devouring fires? who can dwell with everlasting burnings?* Ah everlasting feaver, or an but an everlasting tooth-ach, were a misery unspeakable. But what are these to the *lying in that lake which burneth with fire and brimstone to all eternitie*? Oh methinks, the name of everlasting fire, and everlasting burnings should awaken all uncharitable men out of their security, and stir them up without any farther delay to bewail their former unmercifulness, to beg the pardon thereof; and unfeignedly to resolve, willingly to give out of their store to-  
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wards the relief of the poor, proportionably to what God hath graciously bestowed on them. It may be, thou hast a plentiful portion of this worlds goods; but oh, what will it profit thee to live plentifully here, and to be eternally miserable hereafter? Seriously I cannot but stand amazed to consider, how men who do believe the words of Christ to be true, That all uncharitable men shall by him at the last day be sentenced into everlasting burning for their not feeding the hungry, nor cloathing the naked; and yet can be so hard-hearted, as not to harken to the cry of the poor.

3. *The misery of uncharitable persons appeareth in this, That the wants and necessities of the poor cry loud to heaven against them.* God hath dealt bountifully with thee, loading thee with his benefits (as the Psalmist speaketh (Psal. 68. 19.) and hath given thee not only food and raiment, things needful, and necessary, but an abundance, an affluency of outward things, even all things richly to enjoy: but how many of Christs Ministers and members are in great want, not having wherewithal to satisfie their own and childrens hunger? whose miseries like the blood of Abel cry unto God for vengeance against thee, saying, Lord, there are not a few who have enough and to spare, a liberal portion of this worlds goods, with Dives they fare sumptuously every day: but what are we thy wanting servants the better for them? who of us are warmed with their fires, or clothed with their rayment, or so much as partake of the crums of their table? we are ready to perish for want, when they are surfeited with their abundance. Is the blessing of them that are ready to perish like to come upon them? wilt not thou judge them O Lord? Certainly, these bitter and lamentable complaints cry loud in the ears of the Almighty against such unchristian and inhumane misers. Beware of the cry of the poor against you: If thou wilt not hear their cries unto thee, God will hear their cries against thee.

4. *Thy unmercifulness to the poor will provoke God to reject thy most religious exercises;* Pro. 21. 13. *Who so stoppeth his ears at the cry of the poor, he also shall cry himself, but shall not be heard.* In which words Solomon hinteth to us two things.

1. That unmerciful men, such as turn away their ears

## Way of Thriving.

ears from the cry of the poor, shall fall into such miseries as will bring them to their knees, and make them cry sooner or latter. Here in this world worldly men sometimes make many prayers, and their religion they hope will make amends, for their inhumanity at least. And in the world to come they shall follow their fellow *Dives* in his infernal devotion.

2. *Though they cry, yet they shall not be heard*: whether they cry here upon their death-beds for mercy, or hereafter in Hell for ease, they shall not be heard. A notable instance hereof we have in *Dives* who though he cried not here, yet he cried in hell, saying, *Father Abraham have Mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue, for I am tormented in this flame*, Luk. 16. 24. But was he heard? was his request granted? 'twas but a small request, but yet it is denied. Because he denied crumbs of bread here in his life to the poor, he was denied a drop of water in Hell.

And as thy prayers are rejected by God, so likewise will it be in vain for thee to hear the word, or come to the table of the Lord. All thy religion will be in vain shall I say? Nay it will be an abomination to the Lord, whilst that accursed thing thy covetous, and cruel heart, which the Lord abhorreth (*Psal.* 10. 3.) remains within thee. Think not that one duty will excuse the neglect of another, that thy praying may serve instead of thine alms, that religion shall excuse the mercy of thy confession of thine unmercifulness will make up the matter. The Lord abhorreth thee and all thy Sacrifices, whilst the Sacrifice of a compassionate heart is wanting.

Oh that all uncharitable persons would steep their thoughts in a serious meditation of these things: and as they desire to prevent those judgments which accompany all merciless men, they would put in for a share in the mercies of the merciful, and to that end, would put on bowels of pity and compassion towards the wants and miseries of Gods distressed ones, and stretch forth an helping hand towards their relief, which leadeth me to a Second Use, namely.

2. *Use of Exhortation, to stir up every one who have given*

given up their names unto Christ, to make conscience, of every duty commanded by him, so of this especially, which he hath so vehemently pressed upon us in his word, and encouraged us unto by many sweet and precious promises. This work of charity is wages, and like Samson's Lion it carrieth honey in the belly of it. He who out of a principle of love in obedience to Gods command, shall open his heart and hand wide to the poor, shall find God blessing his stock and store, and prospering all his undertakings. As there is a *Secret curse* goes out from God upon the uncharitable mans estate, which blaketh all his projects, and undertakings, whereby they prove altogether fruitless: So there is a *Secret blessing* goeth out from God upon the charitable mans estate, whereby he thrives and prospers in the world, even to his own and neighbours admiration.

It is observed that they are the richest Merchants, and Citizens who trade boldly: whereas they who are fearful to adventure their goods, have but small returns. In like manner it is found by experience, that such Christians as are most forward to supply the wants of the poor, boldly adventuring their goods upon the waters, do most of all thrive, and prosper in the world. Why then will any man be so unwise, as to lose his riches for fear of losing them? And not rather seem to lose them that he may in truth find them? These earthly things are assuredly lost by keeping, and kept by well bestowing them.

What now remaineth but that you look about you, where you may lay out your money to your best advantage? Make diligent enquiry after the poor Ministers and members of Christ: Seek more after them than they do after you. For most certain it is, that you get more by giving unto them, than they do by receiving from you. And you are more beholding unto them for receiving your charity, than they are unto you for giving it. Whereas you only relieve *their bodies*, they feed *your souls*, as Pro. 11. 17. *The merciful man doth good to his own soul*, which is refreshed with the mercy which he sheweth to others. And whereas they partake of a small quantity of your outward good things, you shall have the same in kind here returned seven-fold



fold into your bosoms, and at last shall be received into the Kingdom of heaven, prepared for all those who have fed the hungry, cloathed the naked, and performed such like works of charity to the poor members of Christ, *Matth. 25. 35.* So that you pleasure not the poor, so much by giving, as you profit your selves by receiving.

Riches are a meer uncertainty, like unto a flock of birds in a mans field, who cannot say they are his because they sit there, *for they take unto themselves wings, and fly away.* Now in dealing with things uncertain, it will be your wisdom,

1. *To make them as sure as you can.*

2. *To make the best use of them that you can.*

1. What greater wisdom than to make sure? And what better way imaginable to make sure your estate, than by putting it into good hands? And what safer hands than the hands of the Lord? Put them into the hands of Gods poor, and you thereby put them into Gods hands.

As in a State Politick, the *Linger Ambassadors* that are sent abroad to lye in foreign Kingdoms secure our peaceable state at home. So what we disperse and send abroad to the poor, secureth the rest at home. For as the poor beg of thee, so they beg of God for thee, that he would preserve and bless thy store: their devotions are sent up to heaven for thy Security.

2. *And what better use can you make of your riches, than by bestowing a part of them upon the poor and needy?* It being the chief end of Giving more of this worlds goods to some than to others, that they who have the greater store should give out thereof to them who are in want. Which was typically signified by the *Israelites* gathering of *Manna*, which though it were rained down from heaven, yet the Lord would not allow, that they who had gathered more than was needful for themselves, and their household, should hoard up their superfluity, but enjoined them to communicate of their abundance to such as had not enough, that so he that had the most, should have nothing over; and he that had the least, should have no lack. The which the Apostle applyeth to the giving of alms out of our abundance to those who want, *2 Cor. 8. 14.*

## The Surest and Safest

By communicating of our riches to the poor, we shall make them *our friends*, both to give evidence for us of the truth of our *faith* and *charity*, and to beg a plentiful return upon us: This is the advice of our Saviour, *Luke 16. 9. Make to your selves friends of the Mammon of unrighteousness, that when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations.* Where, by *Mammon*, our Saviour intendeth the abundance of *this worlds goods*, which he called *Mammon of unrighteousness*, because ordinarily by worldly men it is unrighteously gotten, unrighteously reserved, and unrighteously used. This he hinteth, that his Disciples might be the more wary about it, and the more careful of *making themselves friends thereof*, that is, so to use their riches by relieving the poor, as the good works done by them may give testimony of their *Faith* and *Charity*, which is the part of Friends. Friends are ready to give good testimony of one another. The coats and garments which *Dorcas* made for poor widdows, *Acts 9. 39.* were such friends. But mark what follows, *Make to your selves friends of the Mammon of unrighteousness, that when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations.* When ye fail, that is, when ye depart out of this world, *they may receive you into everlasting habitations.* This particule *THER*, some refer to being relieved, call upon God to recompense their benefactors, but most refer it to the *Riches* which they bestow upon the poor, which, by vertue of the evidence that they give of the *faith* and *charity* of the giver, are said to receive them into everlasting habitations.

Surely, rich men have a price in their hands, wherewith to purchase to themselves a good inheritance, had they but hearts to make use of it. Though charity pretend not to any merit *ex congruo*, or *condigno*, yet will it be plentifully recompensed by God both here and hereafter.

I hope you will pardon my zeal in pressing this duty of *charity* so much upon you: I do assure you, it is not out of any design to take any thing from your selves, and children, but only to shew you *the surest and safest way of thriving in the world*; and how you may entail Gods blessings upon your Children, and so secure unto them,

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the portion which you leave them. I am willing to do you a kindness, and I shall do you a great kindness, if I can but effectually perswade you to this duty: Whatever kindness I may herein do to those who need, I shall do a greater kindness to you that will be perswaded to help them in their need; in as much as it is a more blessed thing to give, than to receive. And therefore bear with me, if I do not only offer you a kindness, but use such importunity to press you to accept it.

The *Apostle*, knowing how backward rich men especially were to all works of charity, adviseth, *Timothy* (1 *Tim.* 6. 17.) not only to commend unto them the duty, but to command it. The expression of the *Apostle* is very observable, He doth not say ἀγγίλλω declare unto them, but παράγγελλω charge them that are rich in this world, as they love their lives, and would save their souls, To be rich in good works. As one wittily glosseth upon those words of the *Apostle*. "If God should charge the *Rocks*, they would send forth water: If the *Stones*, they would become bread: If the *Ravens*, they would feed *Elijah*: If the *Quails*, they would victual the Camp: If the *Clouds*, they would rain down food from heaven upon his poor people; will you then be more rocky than rocks? more stony then stones; more ravenous than ravens? more senseless than birds? more empty than clouds?"

If you be rich in this worlds goods, and be not rich in good works, talk not of your *faith*, for there can be no true faith with good-works, *Jam.* 2. 17. Neither tell me of your religion: for there can be no true religion in you, so long as you make no conscience of this duty. *Pure Religion*, saith the *Apostle James*, chap. 1. 27. (is this) To visit the Fatherless and widows in their afflictions, and you never learned other Religion of us.

The Lord indeed giveth us leave to eat and to drink, and to cheer up our hearts by partaking, in some measure, of that portion he hath bestowed on us; but he never allowed us to keep all unto our selves, or to spend it in the gratifying our sinful lusts, but commands us to set a part some portion of our estate for the relief of those for whom nothing is provided; *Pro.* 3. 9. Saith he wise man, Honour the Lord with thy substance. He doth

doth not say, *Honour thy self with thy riches, but honour the Lord with them*; as they come from his grace, so they should be used to his glory. Now then we use our riches to Gods glory, when in obedience to his command, we therewith supply the want of his children who will thereby be stirred up to bless and praise the name of God for his Fatherly care and providence over them.

Shall I yet again need to tell thee, that thy liberality to the poor cannot bring any loss to thine estate, seeing, The more thou givest, the more thou shalt receive? It is fabled of *Midas*, that *whatsoever he touched was turned into gold*. But it is no fable, nor fancy, That the hand of charity can do it; can extract grace out of your goods, righteousness out of riches, and heaven out of earth. The imparting of Goods to such good uses, whilst it seems to *impair*, doth mightily *improve* what you have, to your most singular advantage. The more liberal any man is, the more likely he is to be a rich man: the mercy of God will crown his beneficence with such a blessing of store, that he shall find, He will never be behind hand with him. Its nothing which the poor receive from him, in comparison of that blessing which he shall receive from the Lord. It may be, thou dost not find thy store thereupon presently increased, yet if thou diligently observe the passages of Gods providence towards thee, thou wilt sooner or latter find thy self abundantly re-imburfed of all thy disbursements.

I told you before that I am willing to do you a kindness and that it may be a kindness indeed, I must farther tell you, not only what you should do, but *How you must do it, that you may not loose your reward*. And if you would make sure to be gainers by whatever you thus lay out, observe the following *DIRECTIONS*.

1. *Give your selves to the Lord, and with your selves, all that ever you have, to be so laid out, whether upon your selves or others, as He doth appoint and require.*

2. *Cor. 8. 2.* The Apostle boasting of the Macedonian Christians, and of the riches of their liberality, tells us ver. 5. *That they first gave themselves to the Lord*. He that will not give himself to the Lord, is like to give but little else. And if he should give all that he had, and only withhold himself, God will not accept, nor reward it. God will have



have nothing of thee, if he may not have thy Heart.

Give your selves for *Servants* to the Lord, to serve him with your Spirits first, and then with all that you have. Make over your selves to God in Christ to be his *Covenant Servants*, and thenceforth count and say of your selves, as the *Apostle* teacheth you, 1 Cor. 6. 20. *I am not mine own, but must henceforth glorifie God with my body and my Spirit, yea and with all that I have, which are his.*

He knows not what he says, that says *I serve the Lord, who hath not first given himself to him for a servant*; God will not be served by Aliens. And he hath but lyed unto God, who says, *I give my self unto the Lord for a servant*, and doth not actually serve him with all that he hath. He that hath given *himself* to the Lord, will withhold nothing from him that God will have.

He that will serve the Lord with his Spirit, will as readily serve him with all that he hath. God that hath given us his *Son*, how *will he not with him freely give us all things*, Rom. 1. 32? And that Man that hath given God his soul, will keep back nothing from Him.

Friend, thou sayest thou art the *Lords*, and hast devoted thy self to him; thou hopest that thou art Christs, and hast joyned thy self in covenant unto him, resolving to be his disciple: but, which way runs thine estate? whose house is this, these lands, and this money which thou hast, are these the *Lords* too? How is it then that thy *lusts* have so much of them at their service? That thy *pride* hath so much, & thine appetite so much or that they are all impropriated and kept by thee to feed thy *covetousness*? Is all thou hast the *Lords*? How is it then that thou begruest, or thinkest so much of every little that he calls for from thee? I thou who wilt not in every case part with so much as God calls for, art either a *Liar*, or a *Robber*. Either thou didst not give all to God, when thou saidst thou didst, and then thou art a *Liar*: or if thou didst give all, and yet will not let him have what he calls for, but bestowest it elsewhere, then thou art a *Robber*.

Obj. *But some will say, Must I give all I have to the poor, and so leave myself, and my family to be beggars? Or, what else is your meaning, when you say, I must give all to the Lord?*

My meaning is, that you so give all to the Lord, as to give to dispose of your whole estate to such persons and purposes

*purposes, as God orders and appoints you.* The Lord would have you live, and maintain your self, and provide for your family soberly, according to your rank and degree (some extraordinary cases being excepted.) But still you must allow no more to your self, nor no less to those in need, then is according to the will, and good-pleasure of the Lord,

*Some other will here put in and say : But I am free and bountiful, and give great alms; I cast my bread upon the waters; I give a portion to six, and also to seven: I devise liberal things; I delight to shew Mercy.*

Dost thou so? 'Tis well thou dost, Gods blessing on thine heart for it: 'tis great pitty that any liberal man in the world should lose his reward; and that thou maist not lose thine, take this Counsel of a friend that loves thee, See that thou hast sincerely given up thy self to God as his *covenant-servant*, and art a devoted Disciple of Jesus Christ, and that these thy works of Mercy are done in pursuance of thy Covenant, as a part of that service which thou owest and hast vowed to thy Lord, whose thou art, and whose talents thou reckonest all thou hast. And look to this the rather, because its possible that men of great good works may be, as of little charity, so of little faith also, which is that grace which entitles God to us, and all we do, and obtains our acceptance with Him. First, by faith give thy self to him, and then by charity serve Him with what thou hast, and then doubt not of a plentiful return.

II. *Offer up your gift upon the Altar.* Give your selves, and with your selves, all that you have, *through Christ*, unto God. Let him be your *Altar that sanctifies your gift*: 'tis through him alone you will be accepted, *Eph. 1. 6. He hath made us accepted in the Beloved.* Let your Souls be sprinkled with his blood; and thereby washed from your blood, from your natural and contracted guilt, and pollution, and then they will be a gift acceptable to the Lord. Do not think you have no more to do, but to give your selves as you are to the Lord: you have given your selves to sin, and now, it may be you think, you will give your selves back to the Lord: but know there is more in it than so. Thou art in thy self

## Way of Thriving.

self a guilty, and defiled soul, and God will have none of thee in this case: Go to *Christ* first, and get him to cover thine unrighteousness, and to cleanse thee from thy filthiness, put thy wretched soul into his hands, and let him present it unto the Father.

And whatever thou givest with thy self, *thine alms, thy bread, or thy flesh, or thy money*, that thou hast for his poor; put it all into the same hand, and let him present this also to the Father for the use of his Servants.

Friends, though I would have you givers, yet I would not have you losers. I would not have you losers, either by *Saving*, or by *unprofitable Giving*.

1. *Be not losers by Saving.* That's the next way to lose all, by thinking to save, and keep all to your selves. He that will save his life, that is, by not laying it down when God calls for it, he shall lose it. And so he that will save his estate, that is, by refusing to lay it out where God would have him, he is the more like to lose all that he hath.

2. *Lose not by unprofitable Bestowing.* All that is bestowed unprofitably, as to thee, to whomsoever thou givest it, which is not given first through Christ unto God, and to his servants for the Lords sake. It may be profit however to them, who receive it, but no profit to thee who givest. 'Tis only whats given to God, and to men for Gods sake, for which God becomes debtour.

III. *Fetch all your alms out of your hearts.* Draw forth thy soul to the hungry, Isa. 58. 10. Give what thou givest.

1. *Out of a willing heart.* 2. *Out of a compassionate heart.* 3. *Out of a thankful heart:*

1. *Out of a willing heart; Give willingly,* 2 Cor. 9. 6. Every man as he purposeth in his heart so let him give, not grudgingly, or of necessity, for God loveth a cheerful giver. An alms-deed in Scripture is called a *Sacrifice*, such a Sacrifice as is well-pleasing unto God, Heb. 13. 16: To do good, and to communicate forget not, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased. Now all our Christian Sacrifices are to be *free-will Oblations*. An alms without a will, is a Sacrifice without an heart, and will be rejected of God.

2. *Out of a compassionate heart.* Get a compassionate heart, and fetch all thine alms out of thine own bowels.

'Tis

'Tis the hard-hearts of men that shut up their purses; thou say'st, Thou hast not to spare, thou wantest it thy self, or those about thee may want it: No, thou wantest an heart, and that is the reason that those that need, must want thine alms. A compassionate heart would find something, or other, for those that are in distress.

Get a compassionate heart. God is a God of compassion, and his children are compassionate children. Col. 2. 12.

Put on (as the elect of God) bowels of Mercy, 1 John 3. 17. Whoso hath this worlds goods, and seeth his brother in need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him (or is a man of no bowels,) how dwelleth the love of God in him? What

ever thy profession, or thy Religion be, or thy hopes be concerning it, thou hast nothing of God in thee, thou art none of His, who hath no bowels. God is a God of mercy, His children are all merciful children.

Worldling, wilt thou prove thy self to be no child of God? wouldst thou prove that the faith thou hast is vain, thy religion vain, and that thou art but a pretender to the love of God, and hast not the love of God within thee? This unmercifulness of thine will put it out of question. If thou hast no bowels of compassion, the love of God is not in thee.

O get a compassionate, and merciful heart. Hast thou received Mercy, and wilt thou not be merciful? Dost thou hope for mercy, and wilt thou not shew Mercy? Put thy self into thy poor brother's case a while, think how hard 'tis with him, think of his hunger and nakedness, of his pressing strains and miseries, let thy soul go into his house, and see his naked walls, his cold chimney, his empty cup-board, his starving children and then think again O how if it were thus with me! Ah poor distressed creatures: how are they pinch'd and pin'd whilst I have enough and abound? O my bowels how can you but yern? O mine heart, how canst thou but bleed over such distressed ones? Hast thou nothing to help them? Ther's enough in my house ther's enough in my purse to yield them relief, but is there no alms for them in my heart? Can I have the heart to see them pine and perish, and do nothing to help them? Where are ye, O my bowels? where are my compassions? O my soul help, and send portions to them for whom nothing is provided.



3. *Out of a thankful heart.* Remember what God hath done for thee; Hast thou any sense or experience of his special love to thee, in Christ? What should that produce? The sense of divine Goodness in a way of *Common Providence* calls for all due acknowledgment from us: But a taste of his *paternal love in pardoning our sins, and justifying our persons, and enstating us in eternal life and happiness, upon the account of his Son's suffering, and dying for us*, this is, as the strongest *Motive* to, so the most *commanding reason* of our charity, or beneficence to our fellow creatures, who stand in need of it.

In Christ, the beams of Gods mercy are concenterd, as the beams of the Sun are in a burning-glass, which falling upon our heart, they are, or should be hereby inflamed, and made to burn with greater heat of love and kindness to all in want, especially to all who bear his image. *The right spring of Mercy to our neighbour, is the sense of God's Mercy towards us.*

IV. *Let all your streams of love flow into the Ocean.* My meaning is, *Let all be done to the glory of God.* This must be your last end to which all must be directed, as the Apostle charges, *1 Cor. 10. 31. Whether you eat or drink, I may add, or whether you give to eat, or to drink, or Whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.* Let this be chiefly in your eye, and your heart, *that God may be glorified.* Other subordinate ends there are, *As refreshing of the needy, the adorning our holy profession, the edification of others by our good example,* but all at last must end here, *that God may be glorified.*

Take heed your end be not to glorifie your selves. As worms breed in the fairest fruit; so pride, and vain-glory are apt to creep-up out of the best duties.

V. *Let your works of charity be done in humility, giving unto God the honour of them, by acknowledging that as what you have bestowed on the poor, you first received from him: So it was his goodness to give you an heart to give anything out of your abundance towards their relief.* Yea, you ought to be ever jealous over your-selves, lest there hath been some *hypocrisie*, and *self seeking* in your works of charity; acknowledging that you are so far from meriting heaven, and *Salvation by your good works*, that, if God should deal with you according to the rigour of his

his justice, he might cast you into hell, for that pride and hypocrisie which cleaves to your best works.

VI. *Let your works of charity to men be accompanied with prayers, and thanksgivings unto God.* Thank God, that he hath put you amongst the givers, and not amongst the receivers, it being a more blessed thing to give then to receive: that he hath put you among the givers, and not the withholders: that he hath given you an estate to give, and an heart to give. Thank God, that he will accept a gift at your hands; that He, whose is all you have, and to whom it is owing, will count that a gift, which is but the payment of so small a part of your debt: say with David, in 1 Chro. 29. 11, 13. *Thine, O Lord, is the greatness: both riches and honour came from thee; Now therefore, Our God, we thank thee, and praise thy glorious name. But what am I, and what is my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort? For all things come of thee, and of thine own have we given thee.*

VII. *Give out proportionably to what God hath given unto you,* 1 Cor. 16. 2. The Apostle adviseth the Corinthians to give, as God had prospered them.

Rich men therefore ought to be rich in good works, for God expecteth fruit answerable to the seed which he soweth. Hath he abounded to you in this worlds goods? you ought thereupon to be abundant in good works towards others: your Pounds are expected, where the Widows mites are accepted.

Having given you some Directions for the manner of bestowing your Alms, I shall briefly shew you the means how to attain to this grace of Christian Charity.

Now the means I shall prescribe, shall be,

1. *Such as tend to the bringing your hearts to be willing to this Duty.*

2. *Such as shall tend to the helping of you for the better managing of it.*

First, for means to bring your hearts to be willing to set upon this duty, take These,

1. *Ofte call to mind and imprint in your memories the manifold precepts in the Scriptures, requiring this Duty at your hands. As also the many gracious promises God hath there made for the encouragement of his people thereunto; and thereupon reason thus with thy self, what? had God com-*  
manded

manded me (Deut. 15. 10.) to give unto my Brother according to his necessity? to cast my bread upon the waters? Eccl. 11. 1. And hath our blessed Saviour commanded me, Luk. 6. 38. to give unto the poor?

And hath the Lord for my encouragement thereunto promised, that he will bless me in all my works, and in all that I put my hand unto, prosper me in my Trade and Calling? That my Barns shall be filled with plenty? That what we shall give or lend unto the poor, he will pay us again with Interest? That though I cast my bread upon the waters where it may seem to be lost, yet I shall find it after many days, it shall certainly be returned into my bosom with increase? And hath my Saviour for my encouragement promised, Luk. 6. 36. That if I give unto the poor, it shall be given to me again, good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, running over? Then certainly, there is no such compendious way to thrive and prosper in the world as by my liberality to the poor.

2. Prefer Heaven and the things thereof before this earth, and earthly things. Though the temporal reward which I have so much insisted on, be a great encouragement, yet the greatest encouragement is the spiritual and eternal reward that the Lord hath promised. And that this may be the more prevailing encouragement, learn to esteem and prize things spiritual and eternal above all things that are but temporal. Suppose it should so fall out, that you should never receive in kind what you bestow, yet count these temporal things put off at the best rate, which you receive in things spiritual and eternal. Value grace and glory above all the treasures of the earth, & count your selves to grow richmen according to your abounding in grace, & your evidences for glory. And esteem it an unthrifty Saving, and holding in, where you have an opportunity to improve in your inner man by expending of your outward substance.

Till Heaven be valued above earth, this great Argument encouraging to Acts of bounty and mercy will lose its efficacy. When God says, Cast thy bread upon the waters for thou shalt find it again after many days, the Worldling will be ready to demand. But how shall I find it? in what way shall it be returned me? Shall I have bread for bread, or money for my bread, or houses or Lands for my money? probably thou may'st. But suppose

poor not so, yet it shall be better than so, thou shalt have *in grace* what thou partest with in *bread or money*: thou shalt reap *in Heaven*, what thou sowest on the *waters*.

I but the worlding will reply; *I do not mean to part with my bread or my money so*. No, I know thou dost not: but the reason is, because thou lovest this earth more than Heaven. Thou sayest, Will *Grace* feed me? Will *Grace* cloath me? Can I keep my self, and my Family? Can we live and be maintained, and preserved from poverty and beggery here, by hopes of glory hereafter?

Go fool, and learn better what God is, and what his everlasting mercy is; let the lasting treasures, the durable riches be more priz'd and valued by thee; and this will stop thy mouth, and silence thine heart from such vain reasonings. Thou wilt never again say, I cannot spare my bread, or my money, when by spending it for God thou seest thou makest him thy debtor, who will pay it thee again in spiritual and eternal good things, if once thou account these to be better than thy bread, or thy money.

But till thou art come to be settled in this Judgment, and belief, both that the good things of God are infinitely better than the good things of this earth; and that what thou sowest in the earth, thou shalt certainly reap in Heaven; till thou comest in good earnest to be of this mind, God's poor are like to be but little the better for thee.

'Tis this, beloved, that will effectually do it, will open your hearts, and open your hands in bounty and liberality for God, when you come to be rooted in the practical belief of this *principle*, upon which the practice of all Religion stands, and is upheld in the world; *That Heaven is better than Earth*: if this other be added to it, *That what is sincerely laid out for God in the Earth, shall certainly be repayed in Heaven*; besides that return which the Lord here in this world oftentimes makes to the charitable.

2. For the Means tending to help you for the better managing of it; take these following.

1. *Either follow the Example of the Primitive Saints, in*  
*seeing*



*setting apart something every Lords Day out of the former weeks gettings.*

Or, 2. Devote unto God a certain portion of thy yearly incomes for charitable uses.

That the former way of setting a part something every Lords Day for the relief of the poor, was the practice of the Primitive Christians, is clear from that of the Apostle to the *Corinthians*, 1 Cor. 16. 1, 2 *Now concerning the Collection for the Saints, as I have given order to the Churches of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon the first day of the week (which is the Lords Day) let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him.* This way and course concerns such in special who live upon their daily labours.

But to such Gentlemen, and others who live upon their Rents and Offices, and to such Merchants and Citizens who once a year cast up their accounts, I would commend the latter way of devoting unto God a certain portion of their yearly income by Rent or otherwise, and then separating it from the rest, to account it a *sacred stock* for the poor, not to be employed to any other use.

All men naturally (through the corruption that is in them) are hard-hearted, and close-handed, very unwilling to part with anything considerable upon sudden occasions for charitable uses. But having aforehand set a part something, their ears, hearts and hands, are open to every charitable motion, and very ready and forward are they the more liberally to contribute thereunto of what is laid by; rejoycing that they have met with so good an object of Charity.

As for the *quota pars*, what proportion every one ought to set apart out of his yearly income for good uses, I do not find it particularly set down in the word of God, and therefore dare not positively determine the same: and the rather, because there are so many circumstances which alter the case, that no certain rule can be given, but shall leave it to the discretion and ingenuity of the prudent Christian.

But though the Scripture doth not determine the exact proportion to be set a part for good works, yet doth it command us, *to give out proportionably to what God hath*

given unto us; to open our hands wide to the necessities of the poor; to be rich in good works, and the like. Yea the Scripture doth commend unto us the examples of very bountiful Christians, as of *Dorcas*, who is said to be full of good works, and alms-deeds which she did, *Act. 9. 36.* And of *Cornelius*, who is said to give much alms. *Act. 10. 2.* And of the *Macedonians*, who are said, to give to their power, yea and beyond their power, *2 Cor. 8. 3.* It likewise commendeth unto us the example of *Jacob* who in testimony of his thankfulness unto God for what he should bestow upon him, vowed the tenth thereof unto God, for pious and charitable uses; as *Gen. 28. 20, 22.* And *Jacob* vowed a vow unto God, saying, of all that thou shalt give me, I will surely give the tenth unto thee.

These examples are left upon record for our imitation; for as the Apostle speaketh, *Rom. 15. 4.* *Whatsoever things were written aforetime, were written for our learning, and for our admonition.* The most that I have heard or read of, who have taken this course, to consecrate unto God a certain portion of their estate to charitable uses, have followed the examples of *Jacob*, in giving a tenth part unto God. And as God did exceedingly bless *Jacob* after his vow; so hath he likewise blessed very many others, after their like vow unto God.

*Mr. Stock* in his funeral Sermon at the burial of the *Lord Harington*, speaking of his Charity, declared that in his life time, he gave the tenth part of his yearly revenue to the poor. *Mr. Gataker* in his funeral Sermon at the burial of *Mr. John Parker* Merchant, and Citizen of *London*, speaking of his Charity, saith, That at his first effectual Call, among other things he then resolved upon, this was one, to set apart every year a tenth of his gain for the relief of the poor and needy; and that God from that time abundantly advanced his estate. And questionless, if such Merchants, who usually ensure their goods upon their apprehension of danger at Sea, would sincerely promise unto God, in testimony of their thankfulness unto him, the tenth of what should come safe into their hands, they might receive far greater returns than they do.

In the Life of *Dr. Hammond*, written by *Dr. Fell*, I find this expression, "The rate and Sum of what the Doctor de-

"voted,

"voted, was the tenth of all his income, wherein he was so strictly punctual, that commonly the first thing he did was to compute, and separate the poor mans share. And how his stock increased notwithstanding his abundant giving out to the relief of others, the history at large declareth. The like I read in the Life of Mr. William Wheatly, Minister of Banbury, how for many years he set a part the tenth of his yearly comings in, both out of his Temporal and Ecclesiastical Means, and that his Estate prospered the better after he took that course. To these I could add many more out of the Lives of good and charitable men, and out of several funeral Sermons, which are printed and published. And could name multitudes of men now living, who have devoted the like, and greater portion out of their estates for charitable uses, and are ready to attest the truth of this discourse, That they are no losers, but great gainers in Temporals by what they have given to the poor.

Mr. Richard Baxter in his Learned and Useful Piece, called *A Christian Directory*, Part the 4th. fol. 195. treating of the *quota pars*, what proportion is meet for most men to devote for charitable uses, whether the tenth part of their increase be not ordinarily a fit proportion? hath this expression,

"Though the proportion of the tenth part is too much for some, and much too little for others, yet for the most part I think it as likely a proportion as it is fit for another 10, prescribe in particular.

Yet I would not be thought to impose this as a proportion to be observed by all; for all mens hearts are not alike enlarged with love and bounty; and some there are who have no more than is necessary for the comfortable support of themselves and family; from whom less is required for the relief of others. But I would advise such whom the Lord hath blessed with a plentiful estate, so that their necessary expences are, or might be, far less than their incomes, to devote a tenth part of their whole yearly income to charitable uses: I say, of their whole yearly income, without first deducting any part thereof for diet, cloaths, or other necessary expences; for the tenth of the remainder will be a very inconsiderable proportion, for a rich man to devote

to Charity, and far short of that which the Scripture seemeth to call for.

And know assuredly, that this course is so far from being a means of diminishing your stock and store, that if it be managed as it ought, according to the forementioned rules and directions, it is the surest and safest means, the most compendious course of increasing it, through the secret blessing of God, which accompanieth the same; which hath been sufficiently demonstrated in the foregoing discourse.

2. *Be careful on whom thou bestowest thine alms*; for by giving to such common beggars who are able to work, and yet are so lazy, that they will not work, but would live by the sweat of other mens brows; I say, by relieving such, we shall both maintain them in their idle and wicked life; and they who are truly poor, and ought to be looked upon as the proper objects of our Charity, will be neglected, or at least scantied of that, which of right belongeth to them.

I am not against the relieving of all beggars; some of them I know are blind, others lame, aged, and past their work; these *impotent* poor, in regard of their present condition, are objects of Charity, but not the *impudent* poor, who have strength enough to work, and will not, those *canting vagrants*, who are the burthen of the earth, and shame of the Kingdom, for these I have no charity: Neither had the Apostolic St. Paul, who towards God's poor was full of compassion; but for *the Devil's poor*, he gave this command, 2 *Thes.* 3. 10. *That if any would not work, neither should he eat*; that hunger and necessity might drive them to labour. Erasmus mentions a kind of mercy meetest for such, 'tis *miser cordia punitens*: Surely the *Whip* is more their due, than food: *Bridewell* to entertain them, than an *Alms house*.

III Another Means for the attaining this grace of Christian Charity, is this, *Be earnest with God in prayer, that he would be pleased to bestow upon thee that adorning and enriching grace of Charity, and accept thy offering*. This Sacrifice, as it must be offered up to Heaven; so it must be fetched from Heaven. The gift of a merciful and charitable heart, is one of those gifts that come down from above, even the Father of Lights, *Jam.* 1. 17. If thou receivest not this gift from God, thy poor Brother is like to have no gift from thee. Now it must be thy prayer that must fetch down this gift from God. Lift up thine heart to the Lord, and beg a merciful and compassionate soul; beg of God that he would make thee ready to every good work, willing to communicate to



the poor members of Christ according to thine ability and their necessity, that thereby thou mayest lay up in store for thy self a good foundation against the time to come, and so lay hold on eternal life: pray for a willing heart and pray for acceptance of thy gift, that thine alms may be such a sacrifice, and so offered up, that therewith the Lord may be well pleased.

Having thus shewed you the *Means* on our part to be performed for attaining and exercising this grace of Charity: I shall close this discourse with answering to or three Objections.

*Object. 1.* Some object the greatness of their charge, the number of their children, who must be cared for, and thereupon have little to give to the poor.

*Ans. 1.* *Hast thou many children, thou oughtest the rather to be charitable, that thereby thou mayest entail God's blessing upon them, which is the best portion, and surest inheritance thou canst leave them; that will secure their stock and improve their store; whereas unmercifulness to the poor will entail a curse instead of a blessing upon the persons and estates of thy children.*

*2. Thou who objectest the number of thy children as a plea for thy parsimony, how justly may God then lessen the number, and so take away this excuse, by taking thy children from thee.*

*3. Suppose thou hast many children, it may be half a score; reckon God for one more; give unto him a child's portion; I mean, bestow upon the poor, for his sake, as much every year, as one child stands thee in; give unto them a child's portion, and I dare boldly say, thou wilt not be the poorer, but rather a great gainer. For thereby wilt thou procure God's blessing upon thy self and children, which in truth is all in all, and without which, all is like to come to nothing, as we see by daily experience; which made St. Austin say, *Thouus præstabis, quicquid misericordia causa de ejus portione decurritis*, Aug. de Tempore, Serm. 76. That which thou givest out of thine estate to charitable uses, will be no loss to thy children, but rather a great advantage. Yea the Spirit of God in setting forth the happiness of a merciful man, saith, His children shall fare the better for his goodness and bounty, as *Psal. 37. 16. He is ever merciful, and lendeth, and his seed is blessed*; that is, God will bless his children, not only with spiritual, but also with temporal blessings.*

*2. O. Many Professors in these days are very barren in good works.*

*Ans. Fruitless and uncharitable Christians may in be a profession of Religion, but unquestionably they are no sound Christians, nor sincere Professors. For most certain it is that the Effect of God do put on bowels of mercy and compassion, as the Apostle speaketh, *Col. 3. 12.* And therefore an uncharitable Christian is a meer contradiction. For who is a Christian but he who conforms himself to the Law and Life of Christ? The substance of whole Law is Charity, and whole Life was spent in going about doing good, some way or other, to the soul and bodies of men and women.*

Whoever therefore having this worlds goods, seeth his Brother in need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, and will not communicate any thing considerable towards his necessities; let his profession be never so specious and glorious in the eyes of men, yet certainly he is but a rotten Professor, and dissembling Hypocrite in the sight of God. In *Matth. 25. 23.* We find that liberality to the members of Christ is made the special touchstone of true Faith and Godliness. For they are the charitable persons, who at the great day of Judgment will appear to be the *Sheep* at Christs right hand, and shall hear that joyful sentence of absolution? *Come ye blessed of my Father inherit the Kingdom prepared for you, from the foundation of the world: for I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: I was naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me.*

And on the other side, all unmerciful men, who have not relieved Christ in his members, whatsoever profession of Religion they have made here in this world; yet at the last day will appear to be the *Goats* set on Christs left hand, and shall hear that dreadful sentence of condemnation, *Depart from me ye cursed into everlasting fire, prepared for the Devil and his Angels: For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me not in, naked, and ye clothed me not: sick and in prison, and ye visited me not.* Hence it appeareth, that as mercy and bounry to the poor members of Christ, is a conspicuous evidence of true Faith, and sincere godliness in a Christian, and signally declare him pious; so a liberality, and unmercifulness to them, is a clear mark of infidelity, and ungodliness, and signally declare him as an unbeliever, so a wicked and prophane person: Therefore I should much question the sincerity of their faith and piety, who making a profession of Religion, shew little or no charity to the poor members of Christ. For as the Apostle *James* speaketh, *c. 1. v. 21.* *Pure Religion and undefiled before God, and the Father, is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction.* Implying, that works of mercy and charity rightly performed, are clear evidences of the truth of our Religion, and of the sincerity of our Profession. And if you look into the Scriptures, you shall scarce read of a man truly godly, but you may read also, that he was merciful and charitable, forward to every good work.

So much shall suffice for this Point of Doctrine.

A word or two for my Brethrens sake of the first *Doe* in raised from the foregoing verse, which is the principal Point there intended by our Saviour, which was this.

*17. That all needful succour, and good entertainments ought to be afforded in special to the Ministers of the Gospel.*

Our Saviour in commanding objects to our Charity, in the first place mentioneth, *Prophets*, and the *Righteous men*, saying, *He that receiveth a Prophet in the name of a Prophet, shall receive a Prophet's reward*; and then addeth, *He that receiveth a Righteous man in the name of a Righteous man, &c.*

Indeed, so general must be the extent and emanation of our Charity, that it must not exclude any who are in want and distress. For though we may, and ought to put a difference between men upon whom we bestow our Charity; yet ought we not to restrain it from any men who are in want; but must act the *grace of Charity* towards them who have not the *grace of Faith*. Yea, we ought to do good unto all, as the *Apostle* exhorteth, *Gal. 6. 13. But especially unto them who are of the household of Faith*. And among them chiefly to the *Ministers of Christ*. So as this object of Charity, *Prophet*, is not here to be taken exclusively, but by way of eminency and preferment: *Ministers* are before, and above others, with more readiness and cheerfulness, to be ministered unto.

The people of *Israel* we read were commanded once and again not to leave nor forsake their *Levites*, especially when they were reduced into any straits and exigencies, as *Deut. 12. 19. and 14. 27*. Then much less should the *Ministers of the Gospel* be left and forsaken by the people of God, when they lye under any want or distress.

The examples of God's people that have gone before us in the performance of this duty are many, both in the Old and New Testament. It is recorded to the perpetual praise and commendation of *Obadiah*, that he hid the *Prophets of God* by fifty in a cave from the cruelty of *Jezabel*, and sustained them with food, and ministered all things necessary unto them, *1 King. 18. 13*. We read likewise how the widdow of *Sarephath* nourished the Prophet *Elijah* in her house for many days and years, even so long as the famine continued, *1 King. 17. 15, 16*. The kindness of the good *Shunamite* to the Prophet *Elisha* is largely reproved, *2 King. 4. 8, &c.* It fell on a day that *Elisha* passed to *Shunem*, where was a great woman, and she constrained him to eat bread; that is, to refresh himself with food. And so it was, that as oft as he passed by, he turned in thither to eat bread. Having found good entertainment, and hearty welcome, he did the oftner visit the family. And she said unto her Husband, Behold now I perceive, that this is an holy man of God, which passeth by us continually, let us make a little chamber, I pray thee, on the wall, and let us set for him there a bed, and a table, and a stool, and a candle-stick. Under these other necessary accommodations are comprized. The good woman desired of her Husband, that a chamber might be made for the Prophet on the wall; perhaps not that she wanted room in her house to lodge him in, but because she considered, that the noise of a great family might be some disturbance.

sturbance to the Prophet's study and devotion; therefore thought it convenient to provide such a chamber for him, where he might be more retired, and have the free ingress and egress; that by those accommodations he might be encouraged the oftner to take up his lodging there.

*Rom. 16. 2.* It is set down as the hight and crown of *Phoebe's* good works, that she had been a *succourer of the Apostle Paul*, in his wants and straits. And in *2 Tim. 1. 16.* we read how *Onesiphorus* refreshed and relieved the *Apostle* in his suffering condition, and *was not ashamed of his chain*; that is, though he were a prisoner, and under restraint for the Gospels sake, yet *Onesiphorus* owned him, shewed him all respect, succoured and relieved him in that his low condition. *Gaius* likewise, a godly, wealthy Citizen of *Corinth*, is famous for that kind entertainment and succour which he gave to the *Apostle*; and the Church with him, *Rom. 16. 23.*

It is recorded to the commendation of King *Edward* the sixth, that he afforded all needful succour, and good entertainment to *Bucer*, *Fagius*, and other Divines, when they fled into this Kingdom by reason of the troubles in their own Nation. And *Beza* in his Epistle *ad Regem Jacobum*, maketh an honourable mention of a liberal collection of the Church of *Scotland* sent to the *French Ministers*, who were banished *Religion's* cause.

Here are fair Copies for us to write after. And indeed why are these things written, and left upon record to posterity, but for our learning? Not so much for our admiration, as for our imitation; that we might follow their steps, and write after their copy, which *St. Paul* testifies of the *Macedonians*, *2 Cor. 9. 2.* How that *very many of them were stirred up and provoked to a liberal contribution to the poor Saints in Jerusalem by the forwardness and zeal of the Corinthians*. And *St. Austin* (*Confes. lib. 9. cap. 2.*) confesseth, that the examples of *God's servants*, did burn and consume his own lukewarmness, and their fervent zeal set an edge on his Devotion.

To these Examples I shall add a few REASONS for the better enforcing this duty upon you.

Reas. 1. *Because Ministers being supported, are like to be most serviceable to the Church of God.* They are *Spiritual Fathers*, to beget men unto Christ. They are his *Ambassadors*, and stand in his stead to reveal the Mysteries of the Kingdom, sent forth to be reconcilers betwixt God and this sinful world; to pray and beseech them to be reconciled unto God, *2 Cor. 5. 20.* Their work is to bear the Name of God, to publish the salvation of God before the world; to open the eyes of the blind; and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and an inheritance among them that are sanctified: In which respect *Ministers of the Gospel* are more useful and serviceable in their generation, than either *Lawyers*, *Physicians* or *Tradesmen*, which yet are useful enough.



1. *Lawyers* indeed may be a means of settling your Right in your Goods & Lands : But *Ministers* of settling your Right to your heavenly Inheritance.

2. *Physicians* may cure the maladies of your bodies : But *Ministers* are sent to cure the diseases of your souls.

3. *Merchants*, and all sorts of *Tradersmen* may replenish a Land with all manner of Commodities necessary for this life : But *Ministers* only bring in such heavenly and spiritual treasures as spring up into the everlasting treasure.

So that by supplying their bodily wants, you do comfort and refresh the souls of many. And what better Charity imaginable, than by relieving the temporal wants of some few, to further the everlasting salvation of many ? Oh what cause will their souls have to bless God to all eternity for your Charity, who have been converted by the Ministry of those whom you have refreshed and supported in their work !

Reas. II. *Another Reason may be taken from the consideration of the quality of the persons for whom I am pleading : They are not so mean as outwardly they appear. They whom you behold so poorly clad, walking so dejectedly, being destitute of many outward comforts, are men endowed with many singular prerogatives and privileges, not only above the rest of God's people ; but likewise above the most glorious Angels.*

Compare them first with the people of God ; they are called the *Lord's Sheep* ; These the *Shepherds of the flock*, Ezek. 34. 2. They *Children in God's family* ; These *Spiritual Fathers* ; who by the seed of the word begat men unto God, 1 Cor. 4. 15. Therefore the Spirit of God vouchsafeth them this dignity, to be called *συνεργοι τῷ Θεῷ*, fellow-labourers with God.

Concerning *Angels* ; true it is that they and Ministers are *fellow-servants*, Rev. 22. 9. But yet Ministers have sundry prerogatives above them.

1. *Angels rejoice at the conversion of a sinner*, Luke 15. 10. But by the Ministry of *Prophets* sinners are converted unto God, Act. 26. 18.

2. An Angel was sent to *Cornelius*, to advise him whither to go to be instructed : but a Minister instructed him in the way of life, Act. 10. 6, 34.

3. Was the word of *Reconciliation* ever committed to *Angels* ? to Ministers it is committed, 2 Cor. 5. 18. It is observable that the *Embassage of Ministers* is not simply to *preach the Gospel*, but *carry forth the Gospel*, the glad tidings of salvation by Jesus Christ, *into which the Angels themselves do desire to look and pry*, as the Apostle now expresseth, 1 Pet. 1. 12. The Lord hath also committed to his *Ministers* the administration of the Sacraments, which are the seals of his covenant, whereby all his precious promises are ratified, and confirmed unto us. So that as in respect of the rich treasures of God's Word committed to their dispensing, they are the *Lord's*

*Treasurers*: So in respect of the Sacraments, they are the *Keepers of his great Seal*. If these officers be great under mortal Princes, what are they under the King of Kings?

I have taken the liberty in a few words to set forth some of the privileges of the Ministers of the Gospel; partly for the comfort and consolation of many of them under the present misery and poverty which they suffer, rather than to sin against their consciences: and partly for the incitation of others to afford them that *double honour*, which the Apostle calls for, 1 Tim. 5. 17. Namely, *the honour of respect*, and the *honour of maintenance*, that they suffer them not to sink under their burthen, but afford them some seasonable succour and relief, suitable to their present wants and necessities.

Reas. III. *Because Ministers are oftenest exposed to sufferings and distresses, and so have most need of relief*. The Bow of the Adversaries of Religion is bent most against the Teachers and Leaders of the people. That word, 1 King. 22. 31. *Fight neither with small or great, save only with the King of Israel*, is often changed into, *Fight neither with small or great, but only against the Prophets of the Lord*. Smite the *Shepherds*, and the *sheep* will be scattered. Experience enough tells the world, who they are that are set in the Front of the Battle, and who are the first that fall by the power of the Adversaries. And *who should be most in the eye of Charity, but those that are most in the eye of malice*?

Besides, For whose sakes is it that Ministers are so often brought so low? Is it not for your sakes, whose souls are dearer to them than their own substance? Is it not often upon this account, because they will be faithful to you, and will not keep silence, nor cease to watch over you, and to warn, and to instruct you from day to day?

Might they not save themselves more whole, if they would hold their peace, and let the *Devil* alone to have his will of you? For your sakes no doubt it is, that much of their sufferings come upon them; and shall they be forsaken by you? The truth is, it is upon this account a piece of *Justice*, as well as a piece of *Charity*, to relieve and succour them; and so you may do two good works in one; the same alms may be both a work of righteousness, and a work of mercy.

Reas. IV. *Your gratitude to God requirath a cheerful performance of this duty from you*. For wherein can you otherwise make a suitable return to God, for what he hath plentifully conferred on you, than by contributing some of your *Temporals* to them, from whom you reap so much in *Spirituals*? The Lord of his free grace and rich mercy hath abounded to you in these outward things; He hath given you richly all things to enjoy. Yea, as the *Psalmist* speaketh, He hath loaded you with his *benefits*. Now, not to return some part of your estate to him, who hath given you all that you do enjoy, were ingratitude in the highest degree: And therefore how doth it concern you often to ask, *What shall I render unto the Lord?*

unto the Lord for all his benefits towards me? Psalm 116. 12. Surely one kindness deserveth another; as God hath been bountiful to you, sure you are very unworthy. if you be not bountiful to his. And how do you think he will take it at your hands. Will he ever say to you, *Well done good and faithful Ser-  
vant, thou hast been faithful, a good Steward of my many gifts?* Or, is it all one to you whether he say, *Well done, or not?*

And in regard you cannot directly and immediately requite him who is incapable of being enriched by us; *My goodness extendeth not to thee*, Psal. 116. 2. It will be your wisdom to express your thankfulness to God by being kind to his poor relations. Now, who are nearer to God than his Ministers? whom he hath appointed to stand in his room, to declare his mind unto his people; who are as the mouth of the people unto God; so God's mouth unto the people; who are the Messengers of the Lord of Hosts, by whose Ministry there is peace concluded, & reconciliation proclaimed between God and man. Surely what kindness you shew to these, he takes as done unto himself, *Matth. 25. 40.*

Reas. V. *Your relieving the faithful Ministers of Christ, may in a sense be said to have something more in it, than if you should shew your Charity to himself; in his own Person, as being a sign of greater love.* It is but an ordinary thing to return kindness to our dearest friends, but to extend our good will to their relations, or servants for their sakes, is an evidence of much greater love. For if upon their account only we do good unto these; how much more would it be judged we should be ready to do it unto themselves, if they stood in need of our help? And so will Christ look upon it: Our bounty expressed to his Ministers he will receive as an evidence of our more abundant love unto him, which he will in no wise forget, nor suffer to go unrewarded.

Reas. VI. *Such as relieve the poor Ministers of Christ, shall have their blessing, the benefit of their prayers unto God.* They will bless you however, though you have no blessing for them. Though you have not an alms for them, yet they will have a prayer for you. But their bowels being refreshed by you, you may expect that their heart will be the more enlarged for you; and this will be a far greater kindness than you can bestow on them. Your gift cannot be worth their fervent prayers. In this respect it is much better to give, than to receive; because he that receives hath but a perishing alms; he that gives, receives an abiding blessing, the blessing of prayers.

Herein did the Apostle St. Paul, make a large requital to Onesiphorus for the kindness he shewed to him in his imprisonment; as you may read, 2 Tim. 1. 16. *The Lord give mercy unto the house of Onesiphorus, for he oft refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chain.* As if he had said, I received much comfort and refreshment from Onesiphorus, when I was in prison, for the which I beseech the Father of all mercies, to shew mercy unto him, and his, by blessing him, and his whole family, with all blessings, both temporal, spiritual and eternal. And indeed what

blessing can that man want, who hath a share in many Ministers Prayers? which are available for the obtaining of all good things at the hand of God, as for themselves, so for others. Yea the very work of Charity doth bespeak a blessing from God. As the blood of *Abel* is said to cry to the Lord for a curse or vengeance upon *Cain*: so every act of Charity cryeth to God for a blessing upon the Charitable. Our very acts of Charity in relieving the wants of the poor, and refreshing their bowels, do pray and cry to God for his blessing upon us and ours.

Real. VI. *Your Charity to them will be hercafter rewarded with everlasting glory and happiness in the Kingdom of Heaven.* This reason our Saviour himself giveth in these words; *He that receiveth a Prophet in the name of a Prophet, shall receive a Prophets reward*; whereby is meant that surpassing and excellent weight of glory, which cannot be expressed by the tongue of men or Angels. Yea, by the reward of a Prophet seemeth to be implied the highest degree of heavenly glory. For *Daniel* 12.3. It is said, *That they that be wise, that is, the righteous, who are endowed with true spiritual wisdom, being lightened by the Spirit of God, shall shine as the brightness of the Firmament; but they that turn many to righteousness, which is the work of Prophets, shall shine as the Stars for ever and ever.*

Now by your bounty to the Prophets of God, you may come to partake of their reward. So that it is your own concernment to contribute liberally toward their relief. Not that your Charity to them doth merit that glorious reward; but in regard of the promise of God made: o all those, who do exercise the same, towards his Ministers, it shall be truly given unto them.

For a word of Application.

*Oh how should the consideration of these things stir up the heart of all, especially such as have a blessing in their hand, and estate to give, to draw forth their outs, and reach forth their hands to the supply of these wanting servants of God.* Surely this is a time wherein Christ is trying your love to him, by your Charity to them. Are you not concerned to make proof of your love to Christ? Have you not an opportunity before you, and a loud call from Heaven to prove it in this way? Can you not hear him, that said once to *Peter*, *John* 21. 16. *Lovest thou me? Feed my Sheep.* Can you not hear the same voice calling to you, *Lovest thou me? Feed my Shepherd.* Sure thou art very deaf to the voice of the *Providences of this day*, if thou do not hear this Call. And will you prove that you have no love to Christ? What do you else if you suffer him to starve, when you have wherewith to feed him?

Beloved, it is through Gods free grace, and rich bounty, that you enjoy such plenty of outward good things, when many of his Ministers are in great want. What you have, you have received from him. Is it not then most just and reasonable, that you should return back some part of your estates unto God, by relieving his Ministers, in testimony of your love and thankfulness unto him for what you have? Hath God given you hun-



dreds and thousands? and will not you part with a few pence or shillings when he calls aloud unto you for the same, as now he doth in these days? Though the earth be his, and the fulness thereof, yet (in a sense) he hath sometimes need of your estates. *Matth. 25. 35.* Christ telleth you of his wants, and sheweth you how, and when he is relieved.

If you have any spiritual wisdom to discern times & seasons, you may know, that now Christ stands in need of your helping hand, now that so many of his Ministers are in want, for the testimony of a good conscience: And should you now deny him in his Ministers, I do verily believe, that if Christ were now upon earth, as when he first took our nature upon him, and in his own person should crave your relief, you would turn a deaf ear unto him.

Though for the present you enjoy manifold blessings; yet how easily can he pluck them out of your mouths, and if you will not perform your duty, thrust you down from among the givers, to take your place among the receivers! Certainly the communicating a part is your best way to secure the remainder and to season and sanctifie it to your more comfortable use.

*Luke 11. 41.* Saith our Saviour, *Give alms of such things as you have, and behold all things are clean unto you*; that is, lawful to be used. The metaphor is taken from the Law, whereby many things were counted *unclean*, and so unlawful for use; they might not be touched or meddled with. Yea by the inference of the Apostle; *Give alms of such things as you have, and behold all things are clean unto you*: He seemeth to allude to another Rite of the Law about *Firstfruits, Tithes, and Free offerings*, by giving which to the Lord, all the rest which they had were secured, sanctified and made clean. So that charitable men are they, who may with the more freedom, quietness and comfort use what they have. Who that hath any desire to be accepted and approved of God would not have his person, and the actions which he doth, and things which he possesseth to be clean? Whatsoever is unclean is odious and abominable in God's sight: unclean persons might not approach to God's Sanctuary, nor meddle with sacred matters. If they were not cleansed, they were to be cut off from God's People, *Numb. 19. 20. Levit. 7. 20.* and every unclean thing was an abomination.

This therefore must needs be a strong perswasive to put in practise the counsel of our Saviour, in *Giving alms of such things as we have, that so all things may be clean*, and sanctified unto us. What's clean you may use with God's good leave and allowance: (clean things might be eaten) and where you have God's good leave, you may expect his blessing. It's sin to eat where God's portion is among it.

The truth is, it is the great mistake of many, to think that all their goods are their own, and that they are *absolute Lords and Owners* of all which they possess: Whereas indeed they are rather *Stewards*, than *Lords and Owners* of this world's goods.

all is the Lords. God of his infinite wisdom hath committed to him a greater portion of them, than to others, yet not to be appropriated to themselves, but they must give him his special part, to which his have as good a right as themselves unto the rest, saving only that they may not lay hands on it themselves, until you put it into their hands. But as they may not take it out of yours; so you may not keep it out of their hands. Therefore Solomon speaking of the right which the poor have to a part of rich mens estates saith, *Prov. 3. 27 Withhold not good from them to whom it is due, when it is in the power of thy hand to do it.* So that relieving the poor is not only an act of Mercy, left to our choice to do, or leave undone; but also as I said before, an act of Justice, to the performance whereof we stand bound. Hence to give alms, and to do Righteousness and Justice, are oft in Scripture put the one for the other, both signifying the same thing. Therefore the Septuagint have rendred the Hebrew word signifying Righteousness, in *Deut. 24. 14* *ἀναμνησθήσῃς, alms deeds.* And in *Psalm. 112. 9.* It is said *His Righteousness endureth for ever;* that is, his alms, or his mercifulness; as is clear from the foregoing words; *He hath dispersed, he hath given to the poor; his Righteousness endureth for ever.* Whereby is implied, that giving of alms is one special branch of that Righteousness and Justice we owe to our poor neighbours.

And dardest thou yet hold it in thy hand? Wilt thou wrong the Almighty of his right, and rob his poor of their due? If it be nothing with thee to be unmerciful, is it nothing neither to be a robber? a robber of God? Will a man rob God? *Mal. 3. 8.* Dares any man be so wicked? How can you expect that he will make a forcible entry upon thee, and take what is his own, and seal a Writ of Ejectment against thee, and turn thee out of all that ever thou hast? Look not to be long in quiet possession of what thou hast; but fear lest either God should take thine estate from thee, or thee from thine estate, and give thee thy portion with *Dives*, who because he denyed his crumbs to satisfy poor *Lazarus* his hunger, was himself denyed a drop of cold water to quench his own heat and thirst, *Luke 16. 23.* Upon which words *St. Austin* thus glosseth, *Ideo rogans Dives non exauditur in tormentis, quia rogantem pauperem non exaudivit.* Therefore was not *Dives* heard when he prayed in torments because he hearkened not to the poor that begged of him, when he was upon the Earth, *Aug. Sermon. de Divate.*

Let me add a few quickning words to set home what hath been spoken, by these following Questions.

*Quest. 1.* Now at length, What doth thou think of mercy and bounty to the poor?

1. Is there not an excellency in it? Oh how much of God is there in it! There is faith in it; He that will cast his bread upon the water, is it not a sure sign that he believes God, who hath said, that it shall be returned again, *There's the love*

*love of God in it: He that sees his Brother in need, and shutteth up the bowels of his compassions from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? And he that openeth his bowels, and draweth forth his soul to God's hungry ones, who can deny but the love of God dwelleth in that man? It is the Image of God's goodness. God is a merciful God, and his mercy is his glory; and this glory of God shineth forth in his merciful servants. There is self denyal in it. Self would keep all; flesh would hold back; it cannot spare for God; 'tis a sign that self is laid low, that the flesh is kept under, that the interest of God is the swaying interest; when whatever God will have, this self is not suffered to keep back. Is there so much of God in mercifulness, and is there not an excellency in it?*

*2. Is there not a necessity of it? Shall the mercilefs ever obtain mercy? Canst thou hope for mercy who wilt shew no mercy.*

*Qu. 2. What dost thou think of thy self? Art thou merciful, or mercilefs? How dost thou find it? Is thine heart open? are thy bowels open? or are they still shut? Doth thou feel that heart of thine inclined and resolved to open thy hands, and to disperse, and that liberally the good things thou hast received, as a good Steward of the manifold gifts of God? Or dost thou yet feel that the door is shut, thine heart is hardened against shewing kindness to the Lord? Give thy plain judgment, what thinkest thou? Art thou a merciful man, or mercilefs? and if mercilefs, How dost thou hope to obtain mercy?*

*Qu. 3. What dost thou think of thy worldly goods?*

*1. Are they not thy Talents, committed to thee for thy Lord's use? Must thou not be accountable to him, how they have been laid out? Will it be a comfortable account when thou must bring in thy Bill; so much for thy pride, so much for thine appetite, or all boarded up for thy covetousness, and nothing or but little for God?*

*2. Are they more worth than Treasures in Heaven? Is it more to thine advantage to be rich in this worlds goods, than to be rich in good works? Dost thou in good earnest judge, that thy laying up treasures in earth is better husbandry, than thy laying up in store for thy self a good foundation against the time to come?*

*Qu. 4. What dost thou think of the State of many of the servants of God in this age? Are there no wanting ones? no distressed ones? What neither amongst Ministers, nor Christians? Are they all provided for? Do not many of them eat the bread, and drink the waters of affliction? Is it not very strait and very short with them? Do but enquire after their condition, and thou wilt find it so. Art thou one of those that carest not how it fares with the poor friends of Christ? Are they not worth the enquiring, and looking after? or at least is not he worthy, whose they are, and whom they serve? Is not Christ worthy, for whose sake thou shouldst shew kindness*

70 The Surest and Safest. &c.  
ness to his? How will he take thy neglect of them? Remember that word, *Matth. 25. 45. Inasmuch as ye did it not to these ye did it not to me.*

Ques. *What wilt thou do for the future?* What shall be the success of these few words that are written for thy learning? What art thou resolved upon? for mercy, or for cruelty? Consult thine own heart; lay not by this little Book, till thou art come to a resolution one way or other, either to accept, or reject this counsel, which in the name of the Lord is offered thee for thy good. Oh shew thy self a man in whose soul Christ hath an interest, and so great an interest, that thou wilt do any thing at his word; pity at his word, relieve at his word, give, lend, feed, cloath, refresh the bowels of his needy ones: Let thy soul say, Lord, at thy word I will do it: here's my bread, and my flesh, and my money, command what thou wilt of it, I will not say thee nay. Thou hast given me a large portion, and every one of thy servants that thou appointest to receive it, shall have their part: for thy sake, Lord, they shall have it. Thine I am, and thine is all that I have; shew me thy pleasure, how much, and how often, and where, and to whom I shall bestow it, and through the grace of God there it shall go.

Friend, Wilt thou say thus? Wilt thou in the presence of the Lord come to this gracious resolution? or canst thou yet find in thine heart to deny thy Lord, and continue to be as hard hearted, and close handed as thou wert wont to be? Dare not to say, Lord, my goods are mine own, I owe thee nothing: Dread such thoughts, that how much soever thou hast, the servants of Christ shall be nothing the better for it.

Once again consider, thou art put to this choice, either to accept of the counsel of Christ, or to reject it; which of the two wilt thou do? If thou resolvest not on mercy, and liberality, thou rejectest the word of the Lord; and if thou rejectest his word, thou rejectest the Lord, and therein sayest, He shall be no Lord for me. But if thou acceptest, then go, and do accordingly. Let the hunger, and the thirst, and the nakedness; the wants and distresses of his servants feel in that relief they shall receive from thee, that thou art a man to whom the Lord hath not spoken in vain. Let them feel it presently, and let them feel it constantly; this year, and the next year, and the next, even whilst they need to receive, and thou hast it by thee to give. This do, and the Lord accept thee; remember all thy offering, and accept all thy sacrifices; the Lord hear thee in the day of thy trouble; the name of the God of Jacob defend thee: The Lord grant thee according to thine own heart, and fulfil all thy counsel: The Lord remember thee with the favour he beareth unto his children, and visit thee with his salvation.



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